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BACKGROUND TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM

AMONGST the mass of literature relative to the long and tragic history of the Palestinian problem it is difficult to obtain any account that is in fact unbiased as between the rival claims of Jew and Arab. From the Catholic viewpoint probably one of the clearest and fairest summaries of events is that to be found over the signature of G. Dumont recently appearing in a pamphlet published in Brussels entitled *La Belgique au Secours des Réfugiés de Palestine*. This is quoted extensively in the March edition of the Greek-Catholic (Melkite) *Le Lien* published in Cairo and from which the following extracts are translated :—

"The question of Palestine that faces the United Nations today is a question of International Justice. It is neither wise nor practicable to base an opinion on religious or political considerations which are in turn based on reports from a distance. To understand the problem properly it must be viewed free from pre-conceived ideas, and its development to date traced out step by step.

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Christians, Jews and Moslems all have an equal right to visit and pray in Palestine because for each of them it is a Holy Land. But its sacred character does not authorize a general treatment outside the norm of ordinary justice. If one would arrive at a decision as to who should dwell there, and who develop its resources, one must be guided by natural justice as typified by international Law; one must follow the modern legal code rather than the Koran or the Old or New Testament. The actual population of Palestine is in fact more important than the Holy Places, because as children

of God they are called to be living Temples of the Holy Spirit, and as such should be of greater value than any soil however sacred or ruins however old.

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Before the recent mass immigration of Jews from all over Europe, Palestine itself was, like the Lebanon, not in the strictest sense an Arab country as is Trans-Jordan or the Hedjaz. The eastern coast of the Mediterranean has always been a melting pot of many peoples: Greeks, Egyptians, Arabs, Turks and all sorts of Europeans are met with, intermingled not only with each other but with the descendants of Phoenicians, Syrians and Armenians who dwelt both there and further inland from centuries ago. Since the Arab conquests of the seventh century the representatives of the old civilizations have certainly become merged in what one may term the Arab type of social life, but they have generally retained their own close religious entity, and thus it is more correct to think of Palestinians as maintaining certain individual characteristics which make it incorrect to class them simply as Arabs, although they are of Arabic outlook and sympathy.

The Palestinians then, unlike the ordinary Arabs, did not wait until the twentieth century to adopt a settled and non-nomadic society. They have always lived in towns and villages maintaining just sufficient agricultural and commercial effort to support themselves in the state to which they were accustomed. Like all orientals, who are not utilitarians, they always preferred a healthy enjoyment of the present rather than to encumber themselves with intensive production for the future. Those who knew Palestine before 1914 still have a nostalgic memory of its simple but happy patriarchal way of life, and even today this is only under a very gradual process of change more in keeping with the materialism of modern times.

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The Jewish minorities of Europe, persecuted spasmodically for many centuries were also infected by the spirit of nationalistic desire that became first universally evident about a hundred years ago. Inspired by the Messianic Idea to which they had always remained faithful and encouraged by the general atmosphere of colonial expansion, the nationalistic aspirations of the Jews gradually crystallized into a demand for the re-invasion of Palestine, the ancient Holy Land of the promise which had once before been fulfilled in their favour.

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Napoleon was anxious to win the goodwill of the Jews for his campaign in the east and actually promised them the re-establishment of a kingdom in Jerusalem—but without thinking of the complications that might follow. During the nineteenth century various efforts were made to direct the populations of the ghettos of Europe away from persecution particularly by Russia and to settle them either in Palestine or the Argentine. The Zionist movement did not however take definite shape until its first Congress at Basle in 1897 at which the creation was envisaged of "A Jewish Homeland in Palestine guaranteed by General Right." The Sultan of Turkey, however, objected not so much because he was anti-semitic as because he did not wish for European interference in territories belonging at that time to the Ottoman Empire.

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From that moment (1897) Palestine became the centre of nationalist hopes on the part of all Jews who felt themselves exiled or under persecution in their place of birth, this being particularly so in central and eastern Europe. Ignoring reality and that Palestine was already populated—as it had been for the past 2000 years by a mixed population now of Arab sympathies and outlook, and also that it could not in fact absorb a vast new population—the Jews nevertheless succeeded by their pertinacity in giving substance to their dream, and at a time when the European Powers believed a large part of the world could be arbitrarily divided and parcelled out, bluntly refused a well meant offer by Great Britain in 1903 that they should occupy and colonize certain parts of Uganda and adjacent African territories. For once and for always Palestine and no substitute was the Zionist requirement and that alone would suffice.

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The first immigrants had actually started prior to this date and they were soon joined by others. In 1883 the Jewish population of Palestine numbered only 24,000, in 1891 it was 47,000 and by 1914 it had reached 80,000. As a result of the war years it dropped however to 55,000 in 1918, but was 85,000 by 1923 when the British Mandate came into effective force. Although the numbers of immigrants prior to 1914 was small as compared to the 150,000 who annually left central Europe for the Americas, Jewish tenacity of purpose is nevertheless apparent as it has to be remembered that there was then no organization in the Holy Land for

dealing with new arrivals and that such were in fact forbidden by an edict of the Sultan's issued in 1892. The Palestinian population itself being pacific and tolerant did not foresee the ultimate consequences of this new development and from actively opposing the strangers from overseas extended a certain amount of sympathy part curious and part typical of the generous Arab outlook as regards hospitality to those in distress.

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Matters may be said to have taken a more critical turn from the moment when in 1917 the Allies decided on intervention in the affairs of Palestine. A prolonged period of active Zionist propaganda in England financed mainly from America culminated in the famous Balfour declaration of 2nd November, 1917 . . . which was, alas, in contradiction to the formal assurances which the Allies had been giving to the Arabs ever since 1915 when seeking to induce them to greater effort in their revolt against the Turks. France and Italy adhered to the Balfour Declaration, and the League of Nations approved it in July 1922, empowering Great Britain to carry it out under terms of the Mandate conferred in September 1923.

The Palestinian population consistently refused to recognize either the Declaration or the Mandate, the latter being welcomed by the Zionists to start with when it obviously was to their advantage. Later as is well known they turned against it and it is indeed to a combination of the unfortunate policies developed as a result of this Balfour Declaration that the years of strife and turmoil must be accounted.

From the Catholic viewpoint I would suggest that special attention focuses on the importance that ought to have been attached to the welfare, the well-being and the wishes of the actual present day inhabitants of Palestine, folk whom M. Dumont points out are in some cases living temples of the Holy Spirit (some 40-60,000 were Catholics) or at least as children of God are called to become such. And unfortunately whatever one's sympathies with the ideal so long and persistently followed by the Zionists, it is impossible to deny that realization of this has entailed untold misery and suffering for the actual inhabitants of Palestine, whose views and rights have been so blatantly ignored that nearly all are now refugees in the most pitiable state of destitution and want, refugees from a land that was not only equally hostile to them but also their home over a period stretching back in all some 2,000 years.

J.W.R.F.

A SKETCH OF THE ETHNICAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POSITION IN TRANSJORDAN, SYRIA AND IRAQ

THE northern reaches of Arabia spread out in an arc of sterile wilderness from Transjordan's Aqaba eastward to the edge of the Mesopotamian Delta. This is the Syrian Desert or Hamad. As a definite geographical unit, it is an extension of the Arabian peninsula. But politically it falls rather within the orbit of today's young Arab states of Transjordan, Syria, and Iraq. As the arc swings eastward from the Gulf of Aqaba, it is a dark expanse of flinty desert rising to meet the slopes of the Edom and Moab mountains of Transjordan. Then it sweeps upward to merge with the volcanic ridges that form the southern foothills of the Jebel Druze in Syria. From this upland it slopes gently eastward to Iraq as an unbroken gravel plain gouged by the channels of numerous wadis.

Beyond the outer rim of this vast, forbidding and uncultivated tract lies the Fertile Crescent, where the "desert" yields to the "sown." The Fertile Crescent, rimming the arc of the Syrian Desert, stretches its western horn along the Mediterranean coast into the Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan. It is mostly mountainous country, cut by occasional narrow plains, and its fertility is nourished by winter rains coming in from the sea. The eastern horn of the Crescent thrusts through northern Syria down into the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers in Iraq, the ancient Mesopotamia. Here the great expanse of flat lands is irrigated from the two rivers which are fed by the spring rains and melting snows of the Turkish mountains.

The Syrian Desert is sparsely peopled today by ranging Bedouin. But it has seen much history in the making. For across its flint and gravel wastes has swept wave after turbulent wave of migration from the deep reservoir of Semitic stock that was ancient Arabia. The first known of such eruptions into the Fertile Crescent was that of the Akkadians in the fourth millennium B.C. Identified as the Babylonians and Assyrians of history, they became heirs to the rich Sumerian culture of Mesopotamia and they infused into it a new vitality while the Sumerians themselves were beginning to disappear as an ethnic and political force. Later waves of Semitic migration from the peninsula brought the Canaanites and

Amorites to Palestine, the Phoenicians to the Lebanon and the Arameans to Syria.

In the Fertile Crescent, the primitive hunter erupting from his desert wilderness and the shepherd roving from the arid plains met and merged with the settled cultivator. The process began before recorded history. It continued through the ages. It is in evidence, even today, on a lesser scale. These differing modes of life all had deep influence in forming the social and cultural pattern of the Fertile Crescent. Other elements also contributed to the complex pattern. For various ethnic groups have left their mark. Religion, likewise, has woven into the pattern its own indelible traces.

It is beyond the purpose of this sketch to follow the interplay of all these forces, some native to the Fertile Crescent, others bursting upon it in waves of conquest or occupation. The Egypt of the Pharoes, the Persia of Cyrus the Great, the Greece of Alexander of Macedon, the Rome of Pompey and Augustus Caesar and Hadrian, the Byzantium of Constantine to Heraclius, the Parthians and the Sasanids of Persia; all these left their impact on the Fertile Crescent before the conquering Moslems. Merely to name them is to attest the perennial vitality of the region. Nor should we forget that Judaism and Christianity were born in the Fertile Crescent, and Islam, though germinating in the desert, was early transplanted there and found the soil receptive to its Semitic roots.

Islam was the last historic force to leave its own enduring stamp on the civilization of this mother land of ancient cultures. In the very years of Saint Aidan's fruitful apostolate, spreading the faith from Lindisfarne, the Church of Christ was passing into rapid eclipse in the Fertile Crescent. The invading warriors of Islam were sweeping to victory after victory and the migrating Moslem tribes from the peninsula followed in their wake. From the seventh century until today, the Fertile Crescent has borne the impress of Arab Moslem culture. The language and religion of the Koran moulded widely differing ethnic, social and political elements into a uniform and integrated culture. Koranic law and tradition became as pervading a spiritual and psychological force as did the minaret become the dominant architectural feature of the landscape. Neither Crusader nor Mongol nor Turk essentially altered the basic pattern in successive periods of conquest and limited occupation.

The recent creation of the State of Israel and the rapidly mounting tide of Jewish immigration into Palestine have

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released a new force that is unique in the history of the Fertile Crescent. It is a Semitic migration from beyond the sea. Much of the bitter Arab opposition stems from this paradox. For in Zionism as it manifests itself today, the Arabs perceive not a return of the Jews to their Semitic heritage, but the imposition of a mechanized and materialist civilization, transported from a spiritually decadent West. It is an alien thing whose ultimate impact upon their own civilization they ponder with alarm and fear. Of significance in this connection was one of the unanimous recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry made to the then Mandatory in April 1946 :—

"We recommend that the government should exercise such close supervision over the Holy Places and localities such as the Sea of Galilee and its vicinity as will protect them from desecration and from uses which offend the conscience of religious people ; and that such laws as are required for this purpose be enacted forthwith."

The recommendation was little heeded. But the point is that it should have been made at all by a Committee that included more than one confessed agnostic and whose terms of reference did not include an examination of the religious situation. They had in mind the Jewish "Lido" on the shores of Galilee and similar projected resorts, offensive not only to Christians and Arab Moslems, but to the really spiritual Zionists who are, unfortunately, a minority in Israel. The present Palestine situation is dealt with in other pages of this review. But the repercussions have been so widely felt in Arab countries throughout and beyond the Fertile Crescent that it cannot be altogether ignored in a sketch of today's Transjordan, Syria and Iraq.

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In an area of some 270,000 square miles, approximately three times the size of the United Kingdom, these three states number a population of somewhat less than eight million. Exact population statistics are difficult to obtain, since a large proportion of the people are still either Bedouin or semi-nomads. The latest reliable estimates are as follows :—

	area	population
Transjordan	34,700 sq.m.	375,000
Syria	54,300 "	3,000,000
Iraq	175,000 "	4,500,000

There is an interesting variety of ethnic groups and in

some instances the ethnic variant may also represent a distinct religious grouping. Arab Moslems, however, form the overwhelming majority of the population throughout the region, constituting more than four-fifths in Transjordan and Syria and nearly the same proportion in Iraq.

Transjordan's population reveals an ethnical uniformity that contrasts sharply with the wide diversity of racial minorities to be found in Syria and Iraq. Alone among the countries of the Fertile Crescent, Transjordan has no Jewish population. This fact is not without significance, especially in view of the territorial claims to Transjordan still advanced by such factions in the State of Israel as the Revisionists and the Freedom Movement (better known as the terrorist Irgun Zvai Leumi). Ancient Transjordan, however, was not without its part in Jewish history. The pastoral tribes of Ruben, Gad and Manasses had elected to remain in the fertile hills east of the Jordan when the remaining tribes of Israel passed over into the Promised Land twenty-five centuries before Christ. Fifteen hundred years later, David extended his kingdom across the Jordan into the fertile hills and pleasant moors of the Ammonite kingdom. But much of this conquest east of the Jordan was lost under Solomon. In 734 B.C. Tiglath-pileser led the Israelites captive into Assyria and from then on the Jews never regained their predominance in Transjordan. War and migration took their toll through the ages. But there was still a remnant of Jewry there in the time of Christ, for "much people followed Him from Decapolis and from beyond the Jordan." As late as the third century A.D. there was still a Jewish synagogue at Jerash in Transjordan, one of the cities of the Decapolis where are found today very remarkable and extensive ruins of its Greco-Roman civilization. When the Arab Moslems broke the power of Heraclius' Byzantine army in 636 along the banks of the Yarmuk River that separates Transjordan and Syria, the Fertile Crescent lay open to the invader. After this battle, so fateful to Christianity in the Middle East, the people of Israel disappear from the history of Transjordan.

The first significant emergence of Arabs from the peninsula was that of the tribesmen known as the Nabateans. At the beginning of the third century before Christ, they had established themselves along the ancient caravan route that ran east of the Jordan from Damascus to Arabia and Egypt. The hunter and shepherd settled down to agriculture and commerce and by 100 B.C. they had become a powerful

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kingdom. Their capital was Petra, an extraordinary city whose public buildings of modified Greek style were carved out of the rose-red sandstone cliffs. In the days of its glory, the kings of Petra ruled as far north as Damascus in Syria and as far west as Gaza on the coast of Palestine. It was an Arab princess from this city, the daughter of king Aretas of Nabatea, whom Herod put away to marry his brother's wife and bring upon himself the bold censure of Saint John the Baptist.

In A.D. 106, under the Emperor Trajan, the Nabatean kingdom was reduced to a dependency of Rome and out of it was created the Province of Arabia. Eastern Palestine, today's Transjordan plus the Hauran region of Syria, was even then a thoroughly Arab land. The only non-Arabic elements in Transjordan's present population are a few hundred Armenians and some twenty thousand Circassians. The Armenians fled the Turkish massacres of World War I and are settled mostly in the capital, Amman. They are engaged principally in commerce and retain that close-knit cohesion that is characteristic of Armenian refugee colonies throughout the Middle East. Thus far, their very lack of numbers has spared them the complications that generally beset the larger ethnic minority groups in adjacent countries. Like the Armenians, the Circassians owe their presence in Transjordan to an aftermath of Turkish defeat in war. Originally they inhabited the Caucasus Mountains. When that region was claimed by a victorious Russia after her war with Turkey in 1877, the Moslem Circassians refused to live under a Christian regime. To the number of several hundred thousand they withdrew from their mountain homes to settle elsewhere in the domain of the Sultan. The Circassians of Transjordan are settled mostly in prosperous farming communities in the hills of the Balka and in the Jebel Ajloun. They have almost universally adopted the Arabic language and this fact, together with their Moslem religion and social traditions, makes them an inconspicuous ethnic minority. As physical types, however, they are rather Aryan than Semitic; although it is not unusual to see among them individuals whose features recall the invasion of Hulagu Khan from the Mongol steppes of Asia.

In Syria the ethnical position is more complex. Not only is there greater diversity of racial strain, but in most cases such diversity is compounded with religious division. This gives rise, particularly in the social and political fields, to complications that will be noted later in this sketch.

Throughout recorded history the population of Syria has been essentially Semitic. The Aramean strain of the first Semitic immigrants from Arabia had been reinforced by a large admixture of Arab blood even when the Seleucid heirs to Alexander's eastern empire established their capital at Antioch in 330 B.C. The numerous Greek colonists who thronged to Syria then have left little of their ethnical impress. The Levantine Greeks of today, who are but a few thousand and live chiefly in the coastal cities of Syria are mostly a modern immigration. The Greeks of the Decapolis and later Byzantine days are remembered chiefly in the elaborate ruins of their splendid cities, in the architectural stamp they left upon the country and the liturgy they bequeathed to most of the Oriental Christians.

Eastern Syria was already dominated by the Arabs before the advent of Roman military government in the first century before Christ. The plain stretching east from Damascus to the Euphrates was the realm of the Beni Jafn who later, as the Arab Christian kingdom of the Ghassanides, served as a buffer between their patron, a fading Byzantium, and a revived Persia. The Arab Moslem invasion marked the end of the Ghassanid kingdom and reached into western Syria. It began to set the pattern of life that marks Syria to this day.

Among the ethnical minority groups, successive Syrian governments in modern times have found none more difficult to rule than the Druses. They are a fiercely independent and belligerent mountain people of mixed descent, centred today in the Jebel Druze area south of Damascus. Here they number slightly more than fifty thousand. They have a definite Arabic strain in their blood, but their chief clans also claim relationship with the Kurds and Turkomen who, at intervals after the Arab conquest, were masters of the eastern Moslem Empire. Their war-like nature might well be an inheritance from these former rulers of Syria. Their religion contains elements of Islam but they do not consider themselves true Moslems. They find, therefore, the double inspiration of race and religion for their antipathy toward the government at Damascus.

More orthodox in their profession of Islam, yet ethnically more distinct from their Arab rulers, are the Kurds and the Circassians. The latter, like the Circassians of Transjordan, date their coming from the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. More numerous and more widely dispersed than the Circassians of Transjordan, they too are settled on the land and have been

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peacefully integrated into the life of their adopted country. The Kurds, on the other hand, are a potential problem. They are of Aryan or, more exactly, of Indo-Iranian stock and their homeland is the arc of mountains lying beyond the eastern horn of the Fertile Crescent. The region bears the name of Kurdistan; but the significance is rather ethnic than political, since it belongs politically to Iraq, Turkey and Iran. The Kurds of Syria are a mere fragment of Kurdistan's three million people, numbering only a few thousand. But they share the strong cohesion that binds all Kurds together. The bond is an ethnical solidarity enforced by a distinct language. It grips stronger than the ties of religious unity with Arab Moslems. Living in the north-east of Syria, where the hills begin to rise above the Euphrates-Tigris basin, the Syrian Kurds are really a western projection of Kurdistan. They are potentially, therefore, a separatist group and constitute a political problem that will be considered in conjunction with the Kurds of Iraq.

The Armenians of Syria are another ethnic minority with little prospect of assimilation. They number about thirty-five thousand and are a refugee population, having fled the Turkish massacres of World War I. Ethnically they are an Indo-European people who jealously guard their own distinctive language in their land of exile. They proudly remember that they were the first people to embrace Christianity as a nation. The vast majority are Gregorians, separated from Rome since the fifth century, and so closely do they identify their religion with their race that they look upon the minority of Catholic Armenians not only as apostates from their ancient faith but as traitors to the Armenian nation. Since the end of the recent war, Soviet Russia has exerted considerable effort toward luring these people back to their ancient homeland. The Russian effort has not tended to confirm the political stability of Syria.

The non-Moslem Semites of Syria are represented by the Jews and native Christians. To the stranger these latter are a confusing medley of Orthodox and Uniate groups. There are Greek Catholics and Greek Orthodox who are Greek neither in race nor language, but only in the Byzantine form of their liturgy whose language is Arabic. There are Syrian Catholics and Syrian Orthodox, or Jacobites, who still preserve their ancient Aramaic tongue in their liturgy. These are only the major groups in Syria, for whose religious history the reader must be referred to such standard authors as Fortescue

Attwater and Janin. Together these groups number about a quarter of a million, with the Greek Orthodox nearly as numerous as the others combined. Ethnically, they are hardly distinguishable today from the settled Arab Moslem. Only the practised observer would detect subtle differences such as local environment might foster anywhere among people of the same racial strain.

The Jewish community has been considerably reduced during the past twenty years. Migration into what was considered the more friendly atmosphere of the Lebanon and Palestine has left a Jewish population of twelve thousand in Syria in contrast to double that number twenty years ago. The present Jewish population is a mixture of Sephardic Jews who found refuge in the Turkish Empire on their banishment from Spain in the late fifteenth century and the Ashkenazim from eastern Europe, immigrants of the nineteenth century. They are an urban population, living principally in Aleppo and Damascus, engaged in banking and trade. Local tension over the Palestine situation has brought considerable restriction to the freedom they previously enjoyed.

The flow of Semitic migration into Iraq, that started with the Akkadians in the fourth millennium before Christ, advanced and receded like the waves of an incoming tide, each encroaching further upon the shore until the last inexorable swell. The full sweep of the tide came with the Arab Moslem invasion of 637. But the intervening centuries had seen the flow and the ebb of other contending tides from the north and east. The ancient Sumerians had descended onto the southern plains of Iraq from the highlands of Iran. The Semitic Babylonians and Assyrians had assimilated their culture and absorbed their people. By 2200 B.C. Amorites from the Syrian desert brought new vitality to Babylon and later produced the great lawgiver Hammurabi. Then came Hittites from the mountains of Anatolia and Kassites from the mountains of Iran to stem the tide of Semitic advance. By the middle of the first millennium before Christ, the Chaldeans from the south had restored the Semitic hegemony and in the days of Nabuchodonosor had planted the captive Jewish nation in Babylon. The Persians of Cyrus the Great, then the Greeks of Alexander successively loosed new currents into the Semitic tide of Iraq's civilization. In the first century before Christ, Iraq was a battle ground for the Roman Empire, of which Syria was now a Province, and the fierce warrior Parthians from Iran, who had brought to an end the rule of

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the Seleucid successors to Alexander. The last dynasty to rule Iraq before the Moslem conquest was that of the Iranian Sasanids, as constructively energetic as the Parthians were warlike and who completed the splendid irrigation system destroyed by the Mongols and yet to be restored. These highlights of four thousand years are not presented as a history of Iraq's civilization. They are merely the chief elements in that complex ethnical development of a land which has seen, under thirteen hundred years of Arab Moslem dominance, a broad fusion of historic diversity into a pre-vailing homogeneous character.

Although this Arab ethnical strain prevails, it is not universal. Slightly more than one-fifth of the population, a higher proportion than in Transjordan and Syria, has withstood absorption into the Arab strain. The Kurds of northern Iraq are the largest non-Arab ethnical group. They number about seven hundred and fifty thousand and in the fastnesses of their mountain villages they have preserved their racial integrity from pre-Christian times. They have been little influenced even by Arab cultural and social traditions in spite of their centuries-old profession of Islam. Xenophon was the first to identify them for history. They are the Karduchoi we meet in his account of the expedition of the Ten Thousand in 401 B.C. He bears witness to their fighting qualities, their intractable and inhospitable character, their assertive independence; qualities that still distinguish them as markedly as their physical traits distinguish them from the Semitic Arabs to whose rule they are such reluctant subjects.

Speaking the Kurdish language, and probably of Kurdish origin, is another Aryan minority group called the Yezidis. They too inhabit the hills of northern Iraq and live in even more unapproachable isolation than the Kurds. They number only about thirty thousand and consequently have none of the political aspirations of the Kurdish separatists. They are interesting primarily as a social rather than ethnical group, so further reference will be made to them later. The same is true of the Mandaeans or Sabeans of the southern Euphrates area. They are a dwindling race whose origin is unknown, although they claim descent from the Egyptians of pharaonic times. Their language is a form of Aramaic which, with their physical features, would indicate, if not actual Semitic origin, at least long assimilation to a Semitic race.

In Iraq, as in Syria, there is a wide diversity of Christian minorities. Their total number is less than one hundred

thousand, a tragic remnant of a church that flourished in Mesopotamia until decimated and dispersed under the Sasanid persecutions before, and Moslem domination after, the seventh century. These minority groups are the Chaldeans and Nestorians (also called Assyrians), uniate and dissident groups respectively of what are classified as East Syrians to imply their liturgical derivation from the ancient rite of Antioch. The terms "Chaldean" and "Assyrian," evoking memories of past greatness, have little genuine ethnical significance. Both terms were adopted by missionaries no earlier than the seventeenth century to distinguish the two communities as well between themselves as from the West Syrians. While the Chaldeans and Assyrians are Semitic in language and race, they derive far more probably from Aramean than the older Akkadian stock. The West Syrians are represented by the Syrian Catholics and their dissident counterpart, the Jacobites. Among the four communities Syriac, a form of Aramaic, still endures not only as the language of their liturgy but also as the vernacular tongue in their secluded mountain villages of the Mosul district. There is increasing migration from these villages to the cities where the immigrants soon forget their ancient pastoral way of life, adopt the Arabic tongue and merge into the Arabic stream of life.

To complete the list and, possibly, to confound the confusion, mention must be made of other Christian minority groups. There are the Armenians, Catholic and Orthodox, who seem better integrated into the country's life than their fellow refugees in Syria. Through energy, industry and native intelligence they have risen from the state of destitute refugees to that of a prosperous community making a definite contribution to the progress of modern Iraq. In a generation they have risen to an honourable place in the trades, in business and the professions. Finally among the Oriental Christians are the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic communities, too small numerically for special significance as racial or religious groups. Apart from a few Orthodox families of Greek race, they are mostly immigrants from Syria in recent times, descendants of those Arab tribes that were Christian before the coming of Islam.

The Jewish community in Iraq holds a unique position among the country's racial and religious minorities. It has enjoyed an unbroken continuity for 2,500 years, such as the Jews had never achieved even in Palestine itself. When Cyrus, king of the Persians sanctioned the return of the

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Babylonian captives to Palestine in the fifth century before Christ, many Jews elected to remain in the land of captivity. They had prospered from the days of Nabuchodonosor and had found it a goodly land. Successive dynasties came and disappeared. Under most of them the Jews continued to prosper and not infrequently they commanded positions of influence in the ruling household of the day. Under the Sasanid kings from the third century to the seventh, Babylonian Jewry was the centre of intellectual and spiritual inspiration for the Jews of the Diaspora. The Talmud that has guided Jewish spirituality for more than a thousand years was compiled by the teachers and commentators of this golden age of Jewry in Iraq. Under the Abbasid Caliphs of Islam, while Baghdad was a capital of romantic splendour, the position and influence of the Jews was little, if at all, inferior to that under the Persian kings. To such proud traditions most of today's Jewish community in Iraq is heir, for excepting the relatively recent immigrants from Europe, the Jews of Iraq are descendants of this centuries-old community. However, the situation of the one hundred and twenty thousand Jews in Iraq today is far from enviable. The Palestine crisis has served to isolate them and to reveal that the assimilation of centuries was more superficial than profound. For those who accept the Belloc thesis that the Jews will never be absorbed into the society through which they move, Iraq can be cited as a case in point.

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It needs no miracle of insight to perceive that social conditions in Transjordan, Syria and Iraq are far from Utopian. But it is a false appraisal to condemn these countries as a hopelessly outmoded and inherently backward civilization, perpetuating the least commendable features of a feudal society. The tribal structure of society, with its tradition of patriarchal government is still a living influence in these countries. Of its nature, such a structure is no less compatible with human dignity and essential freedom than western society as it exists today in many places with its apparatus of parliamentary government which is so often a mere façade for an economic or political dictatorship. The Bedu under his black tent and the farmer tilling his own acres, in spite of a standard of living considered primitive by a western observer, know less of discontent and frustration, of real vassalage and serfdom, than many an urban wage-slave in the teeming cities of the industrialized West. The wretched tenant farmer, however, is

in a different position. More often than not he is exploited by the wealthy land owner, and living outside the system of tribe or clan he lacks the advantage of their common force to bring redress. The tribal system has another advantage to recommend it in lands where the population is widely scattered and communications are rendered difficult by the rugged complex of desert and mountainous terrain. In matters of practical administration the central government must often rely on the authority of the sheikh of the tribe or chief of the clan when its own authority cannot reach a distant or scattered people.

Any just appraisal of social conditions in these countries must take into consideration the 400 years of Turkish mis-government from which the Middle East was liberated only after the first World War. While Europe was moving forward to new achievements under the impulse of the Renaissance and the discovery of new worlds, the Arab Middle East was falling under Turkish domination. Then from 1517 until 1917 it was condemned by the Turks to progressive deterioration, climaxed by the disruption and decay of Turkey herself under the thirty-three year despotism of the Sultan Abdul Hamid II from 1876 until 1909.

Although agriculture was the essential economy of these countries, it was altogether neglected by their Turkish rulers, except for the inspection of crops with a view to assessing their taxable value. In the Turkish scheme of governing, the custom house was more important than the school. So the tax-collector was a more familiar figure than the teacher. The barracks and the gaol were stronger instruments of subjugation than the clinic and the hospital. The former flourished, while such of the latter as existed were private foundations or establishments of foreign missionary societies. So also with the schools, except for the few and inefficient government institutions whose primary function was not so much to educate as to impose the Turkish language on reluctant Arab subjects. The educational position of Iraq may be taken as typical. At the end of the first World War it was estimated that ninety per cent of the population were illiterate. Of the educated ten per cent, most were the product of Christian and Jewish schools within the country. For all higher education it was necessary to go abroad.

Such, in brief, were these countries as they emerged from their long eclipse under the impact of the first World War. They had, in a very true sense, to move out of the sixteenth

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exploited system of force to entage to widely by the ain. In ernment tribe or a distant countries ish mis- tered only for- renaissance East was until eteriora- y herself in Abdul of these h rulers, ssessing gverning, ool. So teacher. ments of former private societie. inefficient s not so uage on of Iraq rld War on were product ry. For ed from d War. sixteenth century to confront the twentieth with all its confusion of international antagonisms, scientific advancement and industrialized civilization. They found themselves whirled into the age of the airplane without transition through the age of the steam engine or the automobile. It is only against such a background that the progress achieved during the past thirty years in Transjordan, Syria and Iraq can be seen in its true perspective and justly appraised. Public school and health systems and social services, unknown in the Turkish regime, have been developed. Certain University Faculties have been founded in Damascus and Baghdad, and the Governments send many students abroad annually for advanced professional training, especially in the fields of medicine, dentistry, engineering and agriculture. Departments of Agriculture have been established by the three countries, conducting experimental farms, studying the problems of soil erosion and deficiency, crop rotation, irrigation, etc., and passing on the fruit of their studies to the cultivator.

If the actual progress made in improving the social picture suffers by comparison with the splendid achievements of Jewish Palestine with which it is invariably compared, it is but deception to conclude, as so many casual observers persist in doing, that Jewish Palestine is the only hope of bringing progress and modernization to the Middle East. It must not be overlooked that the achievements of Jewish Palestine were wrought by immigrants from twentieth century Europe, already schooled in the techniques and skills of twentieth century Europe's scientific progress, and adequately subsidized by Jewish funds from abroad. This is not to belittle the Jewish achievement. It is merely to insist that this achievement is not the proper gauge with which to measure the extent of Arab progress from more remote and difficult beginnings.

Although France in Syria and England in Transjordan and Iraq made substantial contributions to this progress, particularly during the years of tutelage under the Mandatory regime, the Arabs themselves cannot be denied the principal share of credit. However, with all due credit for the progress made, there are still vast distances to cover before the long handicap of Turkish neglect is overcome in the social field. But there is danger in too hasty efforts to close the gap between themselves and the west, whose institutions they envy, and which has exerted such strong impact on them during two World Wars and the stormy interval of social ferment between.

These governments are acutely conscious of the dominant cultural and political position the Arab Middle East once commanded. In their drive to regain something of that ascendancy, they are inclined to adopt without sufficient discrimination the apparatus and institutions of western society. Western forms of parliamentary government were quickly introduced in Transjordan, Syria and Iraq. But such forms are not a magic formula of success. For these and other western institutions must be adapted to their own ancient customs and traditions and to the latent potentialities of their people. Too great haste and too little discrimination will produce only a superficial transformation that may lead in the end, to disappointment and frustration. To fuse what is best in native tradition with what is worthiest in foreign importation is a work of slow growth, fostered by careful reflection rather than frenzied activity.

Transjordan has been more fortunate than its neighbours in that its problems are less complicated. Ethnically and socially it is more homogeneous. It has a higher percentage of cultivable land, most of which lies in the western hill country, free from malaria and bilharzia, the twin plagues of river-basin irrigation in the lowlands of Syria and Iraq. The system of land tenure reveals a broad basis of family ownership, the average family holding being twenty-five acres. This is a healthy condition in an essentially agricultural community. It gives little scope to the system of tenant farming that reduces so many thousands of families in Syria and Iraq to utter dependence on the great landowner, who is often an unscrupulous exploiter of their wretchedness. Until Syria and Iraq meet the challenge of the evils of tenant farming they will not narrow the gap between the extremes of wealth and poverty that mar their social structure. Their efforts to stamp out disease and illiteracy among the tenant farmers, however commendable the efforts may be, will prove in the long run to be so much tilting at windmills until a system of land reform is introduced.

The Government in Baghdad is perhaps more sensitive to the problem of illiteracy than its counterparts in Damascus and Amman. In the golden days of the Abbasid Caliphs, Baghdad was the cultural centre of the world and left a rich heritage of literature in the fields of poetry and prose, philosophy and science, theology and mysticism. The impatience of the present rulers to reclaim something of that lost heritage is understandable and acknowledgement of their efforts in

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that direction should be made. A sound educational programme has been worked out, based on free elementary education for boys and girls. In rural districts special emphasis is placed on health education and agriculture. There are at present in operation some 950 Elementary schools with an approximate registration of one hundred thousand. There are sixty-six Secondary schools with an approximate registration of twelve thousand. The fact that girls form slightly more than twenty per cent of the registered attendance in both Elementary and Secondary schools reveals the extent to which the former deep-rooted distrust and disapproval of female education during the Turkish regime have been overcome. There are Teachers' Training schools for young men and women in addition to colleges of engineering, pharmacy, law and medicine. A school for nurses and midwives providing special training in obstetrics serves a particularly useful function in a Moslem country where women are still reluctant to put themselves under the male doctor's care. The overall picture is one of a system of education that has adapted what is most suitable in the methods and content of western education to the particular needs of the country. Out of a total annual budget of nearly twenty-four million pounds, approximately two million pounds support this educational programme. Figures for public expenditures on education in Turkish times are not available. But an index can be borrowed from Egypt where similar conditions prevailed before the British occupation. In some years the government expenditure on this item was as little as thirty thousand pounds and that at a time, in the 1870's, when the population of Egypt was greater than that of today's Iraq.

Where so much has been so well accomplished it may seem captious to offer criticism. But Iraq has shown intemperate zeal in emulating the west by making elementary education compulsory. In the present social complexities of Iraq, illiteracy is not the primary ill, nor will its cure prove a universal remedy. Fortunately, lack of financial resources and trained personnel have made it impossible to implement the compulsory programme. The Bedouin are not yet ready for that infringement on their liberty which the classroom would entail. Besides, though generally unable to read and write, they are literate in their own fashion. Their pattern of speech is moulded on the sonorous language of the Koran, chapters of which they can recite by rote. They cultivate the art of oratory. The minstrel is still an honoured figure among

them and they can criticize his improvisations, either of tune or verse, with keen appraisal. When and if they abandon their roving life, books may appeal to them as something to be cultivated. Such minority groups as the Yezidis and Mandeans live peaceably in their chosen isolation, following the rituals of their strange religions. They ask no better of the government than to be left alone. Compulsory education, imposed by however well meaning authority would serve rather to make them suspicious and difficult. They must be attracted rather than coerced. Another difficulty with compulsory education is that it makes too much and too little of a scholar out of the son of the impoverished peasant. He has too much of the knowledge "that puffeth up" to be content to return to the humble avocation of his forefathers. He has too little money to acquire such an education as will fit him to make some really useful contribution to society. So he will drift to the city to become one of the myriad jobless effendis that look to the government to find them a living. Of such a group are born the malcontents and the frustrated, who are the ready tools of political and social agitators. The Communists are especially adept at making capital of such a situation. These observations, which do not pretend to cover the field completely, are sufficient evidence that universal education is one of those concepts of western democratic society that must be adapted slowly to local conditions.

The problem of religious minority groups involves complications that do not rise in western society. Among the people of Semitic origin, whether Moslem, Jew or Christian, there are certain social customs and institutions that stem from their ancient tribal system. They are the inheritance of their patriarchal form of society. These are elements of similarity among the prevailing Moslems and the Jewish and Christian minorities. The similarity is especially marked among the Moslems and native Christians of Transjordan, where the tribal system is still more in vigour. Marriage within the tribe or clan, arranged by elders rather than springing from romantic attachments; payment to the parents of the bride of a sum proportioned to her position, desirability and attainments; attachment to the tribal centre that is a sort of local patriotism; these are some of the common social customs, aimed fundamentally at keeping the family patrimony within tribal control. But there are also diversities of social custom and institutions that stem from centuries of divergence in religious faith, tradition and practice. These differences have long been

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accorded official recognition under Moslem rule, and in the administration of justice, provision is made for certain of these differences under the terms of what is called the "personal status" of the non-Moslem religious groups.

By reason of this "personal status," the non-Moslem religious groups enjoy exemption from Moslem law in legal matters involving the family, such as marriage and the conditions of its validity, annulment, divorce (for such communities as grant it), separation, custody of children, alimony and succession or inheritance. In these matters Moslems are governed not by a specific code of civil law but by the religious law of their Koran. To impose this law on non-Moslems would be to abrogate, in great measure, the religious freedom guaranteed by the respective constitutions of these lands. For such questions bear an integral connection with the religious beliefs and traditions of the various communities. The religious courts of the recognized non-Moslem communities have, under the covenant of "personal status," sole jurisdiction in these questions over their respective subjects. The civil government accepts and upholds the decisions of these religious courts and, if necessary, employs its police arm to implement the decisions against recalcitrant litigants. In Iraq and Syria there are ten such minority religious courts among the Christian communities alone, each applying its own code of religious law to the questions in its competence. Nor is there a single code for all the Catholic communities since up to the present, though long in preparation, a unified code of canon law for all the Oriental Catholic groups has never been promulgated. For instance, Maronite Catholics and Greek Catholics do not hold the same impediments to marriage; and certain marriages valid by the laws of either would be invalid among Latin Catholics.

It is obvious, therefore, that such a system can breed confusion in the minds of Moslem governments. It is confusing even to Catholic canonists. Most observers agree that some revision of the system is necessary. A single tribunal, applying a commonly accepted code, should be adequate for all Catholic communities. This would eliminate four of the existing tribunals. Orthodox communities could come to a similar understanding. If this revision toward simplification does not initiate from the minorities themselves, there is danger that the governments may impose their own solutions in their current endeavour to modernize their complex legal systems which, to date, are a medley of Koranic law, European

codes in various stages of adaptation, and tribal law. From precedents already established in Egypt, it is clear that government imposed solutions to the problems of "personal status" may well be unacceptable to the minority groups. This could only beget friction and distrust at a critical time when internal harmony, already jarred by the repercussions of external affairs, is essential to continued social progress.

Meriting special study, impossible within the scope of this sketch, is the improving situation of woman in these countries. She is emerging from her long obscurity to take an honoured place in such professions as medicine, dentistry, law, nursing and teaching. When the history of the Catholic sisterhood in the Middle East comes to be written, it will be seen how greatly they have contributed over the past hundred years to the elevation of woman's status in these Moslem lands.

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Middle East politics have always tended to be complex and devious, and any appraisal of the political position is hazardous. It is often outdated as soon as it is made, for tomorrow's events in the Middle East have a way of nullifying today's interpretation. For instance, in the spring of 1947, Harvard University brought out an "authentic" study on the "United States and the Near East." The learned author, long a research student in the area, assembled cogent arguments to prove that Britain, come what may, was resolved to maintain its rule in Palestine. In fact, he cited this British resolve as the most serious obstacle to a comprehensive solution of the whole Palestine problem. It must have occasioned no little embarrassment to author and sponsor alike when, even before the volume reached the booksellers' shelves, Britain had already expressed her desire to relinquish the Mandate and had turned over the Palestine problem to the United Nations. The "most serious obstacle" has indeed been removed; but one can hardly say that a comprehensive solution has been found. Such are the hazards that confront the commentator on Middle East politics, if he is bold enough to preview the future.

The present political position in Transjordan, Syria and Iraq is largely conditioned by the conflict in Palestine. But there are troublesome phases of the position that originated prior to and independently of this conflict. The separatist hopes of the Kurds of Syria and Iraq revived during the course of World War II. The Russians have established contact with nationalist leaders and, of course, have encouraged the

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dream of an autonomous Kurdistan, embracing the three million Kurds of Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran. Such a Kurdistan, encouraged though not as yet materially aided by Russia, would immensely strengthen the Soviet threat to Middle East security in general and to the oil fields of Iran and Iraq in particular. Even though the dream should never be realized, it suits Russia's purpose to foster it because seven hundred and fifty thousand divisive Kurds in Iraq can keep this country's political equilibrium in constant danger of unbalance. In fact, an apprehensive Iraq, faced with this threat to her internal security, was able to send only a fraction of her army into the Palestine venture.

Even before the war in Europe had ended and the withdrawal of French troops from Syria and the Lebanon signified France's abandonment of her once major political role in the Levant, Russia had begun a strong and successful propaganda drive among the Armenians of Syria. The idyllic charms of life in the Armenian Soviet Republic were portrayed in handsomely illustrated and widely circulated pamphlets. Lavish praise was given to Armenia's military and civilian contribution to the Soviet war effort. Such propaganda was effective. Nostalgic longings were awakened among the exiled Armenians of the Levant, never particularly happy in the land of adoption. Thousands accepted Russia's pressing invitation to return to the homeland. So eager was the response, in fact, that the Soviet itself stemmed the tide of return. For in the Russian strategy it was more advantageous to deal with a discontented exile minority in Syria than a formidable group of disillusioned citizens within the motherland.

The experience of both Syria and Iraq with such Soviet agitation has given them a more realistic approach to the problem of the Communist Party within their borders. It is outlawed. In this respect they are far more realistic politicians than so many woolly minded liberals of the west, who do not scruple to impose the most rigid censorship and severe restrictions on loyal subjects in time of war, but who, in time of so-called "peace" are helpless to curb the known or potential traitors, the disloyal fomentors of war. With regard to Transjordan, it is again evidence of the more homogeneous ethical and social position that Communist agitators have found no class on which to prey.

The most significant of recent political developments effecting Transjordan, Syria and Iraq has been the effective

and surprising collapse of the Arab League. With the signing of the Pact of Arab States in Cairo on the 22nd March 1945, the Arab League was born. Zionist critics in particular belittled it as a British creation and a mere instrument of British policy. It was, however, much more than either. Between the wars the several nascent Arab states were narrowly concerned with their own striving to reach political maturity and each was inclined to go its way alone, regarding the others with alternating jealousy and indifference. There were conflicting aims and ambitions among the leaders. But the impact of World War II taught them the necessity of cohesion and the advantages of combined political and economic efforts. When commerce with the west was cut off, the Allied Middle East Supply Council worked out a comprehensive programme of exchange of products and raw materials that revealed to the Arab Middle East the economic advantages of encouraging the free flow of goods throughout an area where the concept of a co-ordinated economy had particular validity. In the political field the need of unity was sharply underscored when, in the spring of 1944, Zionist pressure had all but carried through the American Congress a unanimous resolution calling for the establishment of a sovereign independent Jewish Palestine. The resolution was withdrawn on the demand of the Chief of Staff who realized, as politicians in an election year did not, how seriously such a move would have jeopardized the current Allied campaigns in the Mediterranean area. But the affair served notice on the Arab States as to the strength of Zionist influence on American politics, a strength that was later to be the decisive factor in the partition of Palestine by the United Nations.

Such were the primary influences that induced the Arab States to set aside their divisive policies and trends in order to form the Arab League. For three years it showed a strong and, to many observers, an unexpected cohesion. Iraq withdrew from its former Pan-Islamic orientation as expressed by the Saadabad Pact of friendship and alliance with Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, to cultivate closer ties with the Arab States to the west. Farouk of Egypt and Arabia's Ibn Saud checked their conflicting ambitions of adding to the prerogatives of the Crown the dignity of a restored Caliphate. Abdullah, soon to become king of Transjordan relinquished his dream of a Greater Syria, comprising a federation of the Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Transjordan under a Hashimite hegemony. Syria seemed less suspect of planning to absorb

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the tiny Lebanon, and less suspicious of Abdullah's reputed designs upon herself. As the Palestine issue approached the critical date of the 15th May 1948, the Arab League was still a united force.

Then came the disillusionment of defeat after the flush of initial brief success. In the frustration of bitter reaction after the resounding military victory of Israel, the unity of the Arab League flew apart and generated in the process new rivalries and new suspicions. Egypt, so soundly defeated in the field, attempted to hide her chagrin by sponsoring an Arab-Palestine Government at Gaza. But most Palestinian Arabs had little confidence in such ineffective champions of their cause and turned to Abdullah whose troops alone had withstood the Israeli forces on equal terms. While these new complications arose, the old divisive forces were revived. In addition, the governments that had promised speedy victory to their people were now greatly discredited. Internal opposition now confronted the unsuccessful leaders. The Iraqi Ministry fell. More recently there has been a military coup in Syria and the Ministry was placed "in custody." Only the government of Transjordan has emerged thus far with expanded credit. But the situation is as yet too fluid to predict how it will settle.

One thing alone is certain, that the Israel Government by reason of its currently harsh and inhumane policy toward the Arab refugees is creating a spirit of bitterness and justified suspicion that will one day rise to plague it. The late great Doctor Magnes, former Rector of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, deplored the policy of using these hapless refugees as political pawns, but such remains the intention of the Government at Tel Aviv. The fighting has ceased. But lasting peace is far away. For Palestine will long continue to be a centre of political and social ferment not only within Transjordan, Syria and Iraq but throughout the Arab Middle East.

FRANCIS W. ANDERSON, S.J.

Chris

CHRISTIANS AND ISLAM IN THE NEAR EAST

If during thirteen centuries Mohammedans and Christians have lived side by side in the Near East, it can hardly be said that they know one another. Citizens of the same country, they consider one another foreigners. The true country of the Mohammedan is not, and never has been Syria, Iraq or Egypt, but rather the *ummah*, the Mohammedan community which does not form a political entity, but groups round the one God three hundred million Arabs, Turks, Persians, Hindus, Malays, Chinese and Blacks in their fidelity to one book, the Koran, and to one man, Mohammed. On the other hand the fatherland of the Eastern Christian coincides with a spiritual reality, existing at once on earth and in Heaven—his Church. In order to designate the Christian communities, the significant term “nations” is still sometimes used: for example—the Maronite nation, the Greek-Catholic nation, the Orthodox nation. Thus while forming human collectivities, separated within themselves, Christians and Mohammedans have managed to share the same countries, to live for the most part without doing each other material damage and to remain in ignorance of one another.

The Koran taught Mohammedans to respect the Gospel, and to allow a place for Christians within the Empire, a mean and humiliating one admittedly, but one which permitted them to live, work, engage in commerce, think freely and practise their religion. At all times, and especially during the early Mohammedan centuries, Christians of the highest rank have been able to occupy the most important positions in administration, business, letters and science at Damascus. Devout Mohammedans, imbued with the teaching of Mohammed had even had a great admiration for the manifestations of the genuine Christian life. Numerous verses of the Koran speak the praises of Jesus, and His Mother, as of two creatures privileged above all others, of the Gospel as of a rule of life and enlightenment (Kor. v, 46), of the Christian virtues, and of religious, who make it their profession to practise them. A celebrated contemporary Arabic poem begins with the words: “The sweetness of friendship came to the world on the day of the Nativity of Jesus.”¹ Christians are to be judged according to the laws which God revealed to them and

¹ By the Egyptian Mohammedan poet: Ahmad Shawki (1868-1932).

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are not under Mohammedan jurisdiction (Kor. v, 47). The Christian religion is not only tolerated, it is recognized as legitimate, because it is according to the Providential plan of the Creator. "If God had wished" runs a famous verse, "He would have made you (mankind) one religious community. But he has wished to test you in the observance of His commandments. You have only to follow the good. Later you will all return to God and He will reveal to you the object of your differences" (Kor. v, 48).

Mohammedans, however, while respecting the religion and the persons of Christians keep them out of their intimate life. The Koran in several places forbids believers to mix with non-Mohammedans and especially to engage in discussion with them.

Even up to our days this rule is strictly observed in those places where religion is best practised, that is to say, in small towns and villages, and in certain homogeneous quarters of the big cities. In the capitals, such as Cairo, Damascus and Beyrouth, centres of cosmopolitan business, culture and tourism, occasions of meeting between different religious groups are much more numerous. But one must not be deceived by appearances: daily contacts in the tram, or in offices or schools, the fact of greeting on a feast day, even the exchange of visits of courtesy and coffee-drinking together, do not amount to a real compenetration of minds and hearts. Even at Beyrouth, spiritually the most open-minded and the most international centre of the Near East, where there are as many Christians as Mohammedans, relations of friendship between the different religious are exceedingly rare. Many Catholic families are scandalized if a relation receives a Mohammedan into the house; many Mohammedans (particularly in the unmixed district of Basta) would be ashamed to introduce a Christian into their house; many *shâ'îe* would consider it contamination to offer their hand to a stranger or brush against him in the street. A number of young Mohammedan women go out unveiled, and the majority of men dress like Europeans, but under the similarity of dress, lurks plenty of fanaticism on one side and on the other, and a deep misunderstanding.

Western Christians who dwell in the east often know no more about the Mohammedans who surround them, than looks may chance to tell them. Further most of them are content to form their judgment on Islam on the basis of a visit to a museum, or of some chance allusions in conversations

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carried on in non-Mohammedan homes. Thus they can live thirty years in the east, on the perimeter of local society, without learning any more about it than they knew on arrival.

Eastern Christians on the other hand, have had a painful experience of Islam over several centuries. If they have learned little of the Islamic faith, they have been face to face with its sword at close quarters. Their ancestors, the original inhabitants of Asia Minor, Syria, Iraq and Egypt, have been witnesses of the progressive whittling away of their resources since the second half of the seventh century to the benefit of religious community of their conquerors. They have never been brought to abjure their faith by violence, but at the beginning there was a strong temptation to tepid Christians to embrace Islam, and so to escape certain taxes, and, thanks to the superiority of their culture over that of the soldiers of the desert, to get quick promotion in the new *omayyada* or *abassida* social hierarchy. We must believe that many of them, dazzled by the prodigious success of the Arab armies, and seduced by the rigid logic of their monotheism and the advantages that the religion of the prophet of Mecca conferred on the virile element in society, were converted in good faith. The attraction of the Mohammedan world for young Christians must have been overwhelming. To save the revelation of Divine Love and the treasures of their religious life, more valuable to the world than their mortal existence, good Christians closed their ranks and withdrew little by little from the society of the empire, in order and formed small closed communities, thrown back upon themselves, jealously conservative, and perpetually exposed to the crushing influence of the society that surrounded them. Eaten away for centuries by a continuous succession of individual defections, the Christian Churches magnificently carried out their historic mission of the preservation of the faith in the east. Today they only amount to isolated minority groups, scattered among the Mohammedans, and making up one tenth of the population. One can understand that the attitude which has enabled them to defend Christian values against the perils of strangulation and absorption into a non-Christian society, has not facilitated the discovery of the best elements in that society, nor assisted the development among them of the universalist outlook of the Church. Prevented from branching out freely and blossoming in contact with the whole of Christianity, badly understood by Latin Christians, at times even attacked by them (as happened at the time of the Crusades), it is only

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Christians and Islam in the Near East 121

natural that they show a tendency to cling to their own religious traditions and to institutions and formulas of a past, in which the Spirit no longer breathed with sufficient freedom.

It is not astonishing therefore that, on their side, the Mohammedans who could only consider the Christian Churches from the outside and from a certain distance, have not always held them in great esteem, and have not been able to discern the mystery of the Divine Presence, which for centuries they secretly treasured in heroic isolation.

Confronted with the multiplicity of churches, erected into "nations," which were rivals under the Turkish Empire and jealous of one another (corresponding more or less to the divisions of the races—Greek, Latin, Copt, Armenian, Maronite, Syrian, Chaldean), and badly prepared by a Koranic conception of history (which confused the temporal with the spiritual) to understand a purely religious perspective, the Mohammedans had great difficulty in understanding that the kingdom preached by Jesus is not of this world, and that it is destined to unite all the children of God in the same love. Even when they read the Gospels they misunderstand the interpretation which the Church gives of them. They often get extremely erroneous ideas of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (which many confuse with tritheism: Allah, Jesus, Mary), of the Incarnation, and of the Eucharist. For a Mohammedan to understand the possibility of the mystery of sanctifying grace requires a direct and extraordinary intervention of Divine Providence. Moreover, few Christians show much anxiety about helping them to understand. They do not sufficiently show this transcendent reality in the faces which they turn to them, and it must be admitted that it does not shine as a rule on the façade of ecclesiastical institutions. It is not enough to prove by reason the possibility of immanence in order to convince the peoples outside that Christ is God and that the Holy Spirit lives in us.

This then is the drama in the Near East of a society at once composite and separated by partitions into racial sections. The smallest town is divided into water-tight compartments—Mohammedan quarter, Orthodox quarter, Greek Catholic quarter, Latin quarter . . . and there is no passing from the one to the other. Wherever they go Mohammedans come up against walls (sometimes real fortified enclosures, in other respects very majestic ones, as at Damascus and Aleppo), or against closed doors, where they feel they are not wanted, or against hostile or contemptuous looks. And from the Mohammedan side Christians encounter the same welcome.

In a single village may be encountered in passing a Mohammedian tribe, an Orthodox tribe, and a Greek-Catholic tribe but there are no relations between them. Every man is ready to confess publicly the faith of his ancestors, perhaps even unto death, but it would be lunacy for an individual to think of passing into a neighbouring group. To deny one's religion is to deny one's blood. The very modern right to profess whatever one believes is recognized by the law, but it has not yet passed into daily life.

In the big centres there is more liberty of thought and action, but it is in them precisely that religious life tends to sink or disappear. Confronted with the example of the foreigner, influenced by atheistic ideologies and the conveniences of modern life, many Mohammedans and many Christians have lost their faith, or at any rate no longer think of praying. But there is in the towns a small intellectual élite of independent men who respect each other and the rights of conscience and the divine secrets of the soul; it is among Christians and Mohammedans of this class that contacts seem most likely to be fruitful. Meetings of this kind have been organized at Beyrouth and at Cairo. In the latter town there has existed for some years an association called "The Brothers of Purity of Conscience." It brings together at regular intervals Christian and Mohammedan intellectuals in an atmosphere of frank friendship. Almost all are professors of the higher grades or men of study, and they meet to exchange views on the philosophic or religious questions with which both faiths are concerned. At Beyrouth the Institute of Oriental Letters attached to the Jesuit University gives a hearing to both Christian and Mohammedan professors, and the courses reach a public belonging to both religions.

Contacts therefore are possible. There is even good reason for hoping that they will continue to improve in quantity and quality. The actual conditions of life, the modernization of the legislation, the development of culture in the masses, relations with the outside world, the whole evolution of the psychological climate in the Near East, will no doubt confirm more and more the autonomy of the individual, and protect it from the spell of the clan system, and permit closer relations between the free citizens of the same country. If, for example, Christians and Mohammedans were able to discover that they were all patriots of the same earthly city, and openly put their resources together for its better organization, they would all gain on the temporal level, and would more easily

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recognize one another as brothers in God's sight. Furthermore the organization of the town is a good in itself, and justifies sacrifices and the risking of personal advantages. Is it not the duty of Christians today, living as they do in the midst of a Mohammedan majority, to make the first step towards this alignment? To work rather for the general good than for their own community, and to show that they are the best citizens of their country? Many Mohammedans, deceived by the equivocal attitude of some of the Christians of Libanus towards the affairs of Palestine, wait for this gesture with anxiety, and ask nothing better than to be able to collaborate. Certain courageous individuals, following the instructions of their bishops, and hand in hand with Mohammedan fellow citizens, have long compromised themselves for the sake of their country and for national reconstruction. But the great mass of Christians will not be able to imitate them, without an *arrière pensée* as to when the governments of the Arab countries will grant to members of minority groups the exercise of their full democratic rights, and especially as to when they will grant them the same chance of obtaining administrative posts as their Mohammedan citizens. In Egypt the Copts, who represent the original and most ancient element in the country, have been eliminated in recent years from certain administrations for the benefit of Mohammedan officials. It is obvious that a number of abuses of this kind on the part of the majority element are enough to warp the mechanism of a regime which sets out to be democratic, and to paralyse every generous attempt at national unity. The individual who is not treated justly by the state in his full character of citizen loses confidence and naturally goes to seek support and refuge in his racial community, even if it is a minority. For in that milieu he feels himself stronger than when he finds himself standing alone in the face of an indifferent Law, and disinterested officials and policemen.

Nevertheless it is for Christians to make the advance, in spite of all the difficulties and risks which such an approach implies. It will finally turn to their advantage; and happily many grasp this. They will only find full liberty in devoting themselves to the service of the whole of society; and if they are truly the salt of the earth, their role is no longer to take refuge in the mountains, nor to concentrate in fortified quarters, but as the Gospel tells them, to go into the world of men, to purify, enrich, adorn and sanctify it.

Nor is this enough. National unity and meetings in public

places are only a stage. It is ultimately inside their homes, in their families, by the light of human and divine friendship, that one day Christians and Mohammedans will see themselves as children of the same Father. In their community of culture, language, history and interests, they have all that is necessary to discover each other, and to come to love one another.

For centuries old antagonism there is no essential cause, except perhaps the long habit of living separated. They fear one another; they distrust one another; often it is the stronger that fear the weaker expecting them to break out into some treason or other—since they have always lived like this in an atmosphere of hostility and fear.

In the twentieth century it is not usually theological principles that keep peoples separated. What Christian of today would dare to condemn all Mohammedans to eternal fire? Whether they know it or not all men are called to salvation by Christ. As for the thinking Mohammedan he respects the Christian who sincerely practises the religion of Jesus, and the Koran forbids him to consider him an infidel, a *kafir* (Kor. iii, 55). Both believe in the primacy of the spirit over matter, the unity of the origin of the human race, the liberty of man, sin, divine revelation, survival after death, the last judgment, the prophets and the angels; in one God, Almighty, Creator and Last End of all things, in Providence, watching over the smallest of human actions, in the just Judge and the merciful Remunerator. Certain Koranic texts and some traditions suggest this interpretation. The whole Mohammedan mystical tradition is a search for absorption into the Love of the Absolute; and it is from Jesus, as far as this tradition understands Him, that it seeks the example and the orientation to be followed. Christians could if they wished reply to these questions and anxieties, simply by showing forth the authentic Christ in their lives. It is not for nothing that the Mohammedans have been placed in their path and associated with their historic destiny. If they become conscious of all that they have in common with them, in the deepest part of their being, they can no longer consider them as strangers to their country, nor, above all, treat them as if there was no place for them in their hearts, in their prayers, in their Church, in the Communion of Saints.

Lebanon, 12th February 1949.

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THE DIVINE OFFICE IN THE BYZANTINE RITE

(continued from *E.C.Q.* July-September 1948)

II. COMPLINE (*τὸ Ἀπόδειπνον*) as its Greek name says is recited "after supper" and is the last hour said in the day.

There are two forms, Little Compline said on most evenings; Great Compline, said on the Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays of the Great Fast (and in the larger monasteries on the Wednesdays and Fridays of the "Lents" of Christmas and the Apostles and the Vigils of Christmas and Epiphany).

Since Little Compline is a shortened form of the other, it will be convenient to study Great Compline in the first place.

A. Great Compline (*τὸ μέγα ἀπόδειπνον*). There are no ceremonies of great note, a single candle is lighted outside the Holy Doors which are closed throughout the recitation of this hour. The officiant remains at his stall until the end of the third part.

Great Compline may be divided into three parts with a rather lengthy conclusion.

The first part. After the opening prayers¹ the reader recites the first stasis consisting of Psalms 4, 6 and 12 followed by the *Gloria Patri, Alleluia*² Glory to Thee, O God, Kyrie eleison (each thrice).

The second stasis of Psalms 24, 30 and 90 with the same conclusion is next recited. When the third stasis begins, all come down from their stalls and face the eikonostasis whilst the two sides of the choir chant alternately verses from Isaías ix, with the words "God is with us, know ye nations and humble yourselves, for God is with us" sung as an antiphon between the verses (as we do in the Invitatory at Matins); at each repetition all make a profound bow—the great metanoia.

The prophecy is followed by three troparia of thanksgiving for the day that is ending, prayers for a sinless night and a canticle similar to but shorter than the *Benedicite omnia opera*. The Nicene Creed (without the *Filioque* clause) recited by the superior is followed by a short litany asking for the intercession of the all holy Mother of God, the heavenly Powers and the Saints. After the *Trisagion* and *Our Father*, the first

¹ *E.C.Q.* Vol. VII, No. 7, page 482.

² We omit *Alleluia* in Lent: the Byzantines make more use of it then, and in Offices for the Holy Souls.

part of Great Compline continues with the troparia of the feast and the day of the week, the ferial theotokion and ends with a prayer of St Basil the Great whose theme enlarges on that of the troparia just sung.

The second part. After the usual exhortation "O come let us worship . . ." the reader recites Psalms 50, 101 and the prayer of Manasses, King of Juda¹.

The *Trisagion* and *Our Father* are said before two troparia and a theotokion which are followed by forty times *Kyrie eleison*, *Gloria Patri*, another theotokion and a blessing and prayer for mercy said by the superior.

The third part. Like its predecessor this part continues with the recitation of a stasis which has Psalms 69 and 142 followed by the *Gloria in Excelsis*: this contains, after the "*In gloria Dei Patris. Amen.*" several clauses of petition and praise.

The Canon follows. In the first week of the Great Fast the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete is sung, in the other weeks it may be that of the saint of the day of Our Lady. The intermediate prayers round off the canon and prepare us for the very impressive singing of Psalm 150, whose antiphon

"Lord of Hosts be with us for we have none other than Thee to help us in our tribulations. Lord of Hosts, have mercy upon us"

is repeated after each verse whilst all make three metanoia. Charon, in *Les Patriarcats melkites*, Vol. III, chapter iii, page 180 draws attention to the devotion of the Catholic Melkites (and the same may be said of the Orthodox) to this part of Great Compline in the following words : "C'est de même un usage surprenant que, dans la plupart des églises melkites, sinon dans toutes, l'on chante les grandes complies le soir des dimanches de Carême, quoique d'une manière abrégée. (Après les prières du début, on passe de suite au psaume 50 et on continue, jusqu'à la fin.) Le Triodion prescrit de les dire seulement quatre fois : les lundi, mardi, mercredi et jeudi soirs. Cette habitude tient peut-être à ce que le peuple aime beaucoup le beau chant du *Kōprie τῶν δυνάμεων* qui en fait partie."

A troparion, three invariable theotokia and forty *Kyrie eleison* lead up to the prayer of St. Ephrem, of which the ending is worth quoting :

¹ In the non-canonical books of the Apocrypha, and in Apostolic Constitutions 2.22.

² On solemn vigils the kondakion of the feast precedes these troparia.

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The Divine Office in the Byzantine Rite 127

"Surround us with thy holy Angels as with a rampart so that safe in their guardianship and guidance we may come to the unity of faith and to the knowledge of thy unapproachable glory : for Thou art blessed to the ages of ages. Amen."

the reader says the intermediate prayers, ending them with twelve Kyrie eleison.

The conclusion. The officiant puts on his epitrachelion and standing before the eikon of the Most Holy Mother of God, recites the prayer of St. Paul the Monk, in which her glorious titles are sung as a prelude to a fervent supplication for her intercession with her Divine Son that He may give us sorrow for sin, and then returns to beseech her intercession "now and at the hour of our death." The officiant then moves to face the eikon of our Lord and sings the prayer of the monk Antiochus Pandektos which may well be described as a synthesis of our Compline hymn and prayer—*Te lucis ante terminum* and *Visita, quaesumus.* This finished he faces the people, blesses them with the usual formula "Peace to all" and follows their response with the exhortation "Let us bow our heads to the Lord," and the prayer "Master of all mercy" (*Δέσποτα πολυελέε*).

The superior asks pardon of those present in the words "Bless me, holy fathers, and forgive me, a sinner!" and receives the reply "May God forgive you, holy father" and then, two and two, the clergy and people approach the superior, kiss his hand and in their turn ask his pardon. During this ceremony the choir sings a troparion ; when all have returned to their places the officiant says a short litany for peace and "all manner of men," with the usual response Kyrie eleison from the people. Finally he gives the dismissal blessing "By the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us."

This, then, is the Melkite setting of Great Compline, although Couturier says that the ceremony of pardon just described is rarely carried out except in the great monasteries.

In all Byzantine offices—and the Holy Liturgy is no exception—the ending varies considerably from book to book and in practice everywhere. Uniformity, dignity and purpose are manifest until the end draws near—then prayers and ceremonies seem to hurry as though, once the climax has been passed, it were fitting to hasten to the finish whilst the former is still fresh and vivid in the minds and hearts of those present. But unfortunately this hurry has the reverse effect

and produces a sense of anti-climax. Or is the rather undignified haste an expression of a desire to finish the already lengthy service? Devout, interested and even enthusiastic in the Holy Liturgy and other services as one may be, three or four hours' standing in a crowded church, its air hot from the flames of many candles and heavy with incense, are tiring: how much more so must they be for the vested clergy?

B. *Little Compline* (*τὸ μικρὸν ἀπόθετνον*) as was said earlier, is a shortened form of the office just considered. After the usual initial prayers have been said Psalms 50, 69 and 142, the *Gloria in Excelsis* and the Nicene Creed are recited, followed by the well known hirmos of our Blessed Lady "Ἄξιόν ἐστω." The intermediate prayers precede the singing of a troparion which varies with the feast or day.

The conclusion. In the Athens Horologion, the abridged edition published in Greek and Italian by the famous Abbey of St. Nilo at Grottoferrata, near Rome, and in most liturgical books the intermediate prayers are followed by forty Kyrie eleison, the prayer of St. Ephrem, *Gloria Patri*, the theotokion τὴν τιμωτέραν and the dismissal blessing before the prayers of St. Paul the Monk and Antiochus Pandektos are recited by the officiant vested with epitrachelion. A short series of ejaculatory prayers, lesser apolysis, the ceremony of pardon and the rest as at Great Compline finish the hour. Couturier prescribes a slightly different order for this part of Little Compline.

C. *The Akathistos Hymn in Compline.* It will have been noticed in the introductory remarks that the recitation of Great Compline on the Friday evenings of Lent was not mentioned: it is on these that the famous Akathistic Hymn to the All Holy Mother of God is sung with special solemnity in all churches of the Byzantine rite. As there are two excellent English translations of this hymn, it is not considered necessary to deal with it in any detail. These translations are: (a) "*The Akathist Hymn and Little Compline*," obtainable from "Zeno" Booksellers, 6 Denmark Street, London, W.C.2, gives the complete Greek and English texts and rubrics in the form used at the Orthodox Cathedral in Moscow Road, Bayswater. Many of the prayers already referred to in previous parts dealing with Compline as a whole are given in full in this work. (b) The English translation, but without the office of Little Compline, made by the late Father Vincent McNabb,

¹ E.C.Q. Vol. VII, No. 2, page 73, item 38.

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The Condition of the Diocese of Galilee 129

O.P. was reissued by Blackfriars Publications, Oxford in 1947. This new edition has some valuable notes by "D.A." who however says that the hymn is sung on the Saturdays of Lent. True, the liturgical day begins at Vespers so that Friday may be considered as merged into Saturday, but the secular calendars do not make this union, and in view of this the writer would say that in many years of attendance at both Catholic and Orthodox Byzantine services in Egypt and elsewhere he has never known this lovely office to be sung on any but the Fridays. *En passant* it may be remarked that in Alexandria the popularity of the Akathistic Hymn was (and still is, no doubt) so great that it was sung twice on each Friday of the Great Fast in the larger churches.

D. *Easter Week*. Commencing on Easter Sunday and continuing until Friday evening (and again on the day of the closure of the Paschal season) a special form of Little Compline is recited. As all the Little Hours undergo a similar change, the description of this, the Paschal Hour, will be deferred until these are under consideration.

D. C. McPHERSON.

THE CONDITION OF THE DIOCESE OF GALILEE

THE diocese contains twenty-one priests—sixteen belonging to the diocese, four Salvatorians, and one Alepine monk. Two of our priests have emigrated with their flocks to Transjordania, and depend today on Mgr. Assaf. One at Beyrouth cares in my place for the refugees from Libanus.

Five Salvatorians have given their services to the diocese; I have assigned three to the Patriarchal College of Beyrouth, of which I have taken charge, in order to admit to it children of poor refugees who are ashamed to beg.

During the last months we have unhappily lost four of our secular priests (including three married ones). Among them was the oldest of our priests the Exarch Stephen Zeitoun, who died at Nazareth on the 4th March.

The material condition of our clergy, owing to the cost of living, leaves much to be desired. I ought to be able to give them all a supplementary allowance sufficient at least to enable them to renew their clothes.

At St. Anne's I have only three young seminarists. The pre-seminary of Nazareth was occupied last July by the Israelite army and is no longer functioning. There are no new seminarists.

There has been no question of building churches during the past year. Instead we have churches without faithful, not to speak of pillaged churches. At Haifa for example we had five churches, which were hardly sufficient for the needs of the faithful; today only one is open and contains faithful grouped from various communities.

As a result of the exodus and of financial difficulties our schools in many places have received a mortal blow. Then there are the increased salaries imposed by the government for all teachers.

Nineteen hundred and forty-eight marks a turning point in the history of the Holy Land. The existence of the new state of Israel is a fact. The territory reserved for the Arabs by the partition of 1947 is not yet clearly defined, but it seems certain that important changes will be made in its boundaries, and that it will be considerably restricted.

Almost all the parishes of our diocese are within the state of Israel. Therefore to our pastoral cares is added the "witness" which we must give the Jews, with whom so far we have had few relations. Our apostolate will have to adapt itself to this new situation.

The élite of our people, particularly from the towns, is today outside Galilee. I estimate that 15,000 of our faithful are refugees. The villagers and workers have mostly returned; the rich proprietors, the high civil officers and the men of professional rank cannot return home. And the people deprived of their leaders follow any inspiration . . . particularly that of the Communists, who are gaining ground. Intense propaganda, lack of work, misery among displaced persons and villagers deprived of their ordinary means of livelihood, the lack of Catholic institutions make for a continually increasing proportion of Communists, especially among the young.

Our first duty is to adapt ourselves to the new apostolate, and to expend ourselves in the service of the poor and unhappy. An immediate necessity is a weekly or daily journal in Arabic to explain to the people the Church's teachings on Communism and social realization. The two existing Arabic papers are both Communist. They are read eagerly and their poison is not suspected. As a Catholic publication is urgent I am think-

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THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

By courtesy of the Rev. Austin Oakie



MGR. HAKIM



NAZARETH
MGR. HAKIM WITH ORTHODOX CLERGY



Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem



Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem



The old Synagogue at Nazareth, now a Melkite Church

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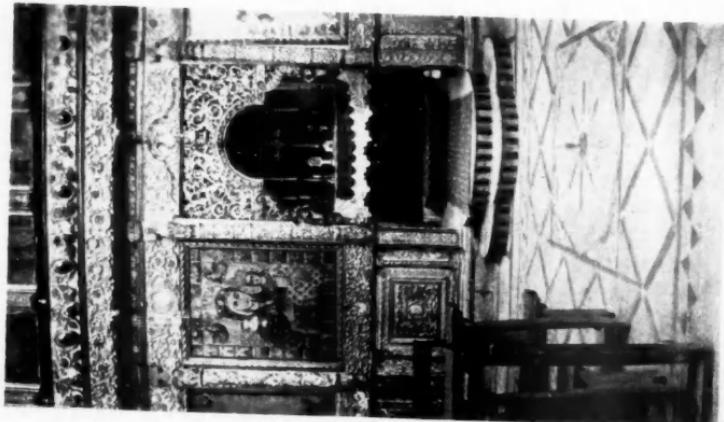
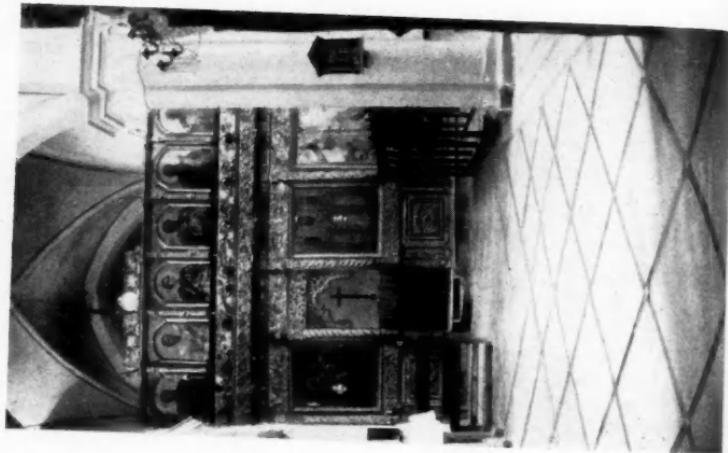
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ONE OF MGR. HAKIM'S CHURCHES



MGR. HAKIM'S CHURCHES

ing of taking up again my bulletin *Ar-Rabbita*, and adapting it to the changed circumstances, but there are financial difficulties.

Schools are important, too. The new state will doubtless extend to all the Jewish system of compulsory free tuition, highly paid teachers, and modern buildings.

The Conciliation Commission is occupied with the refugee problem. Its efforts combined with charitable offerings will save thousands from dying of hunger; but that is all. A definite solution is not in sight. No attempt is being made to impose what would be justice, and to bring the 800,000 refugees home . . . especially as their homes have been systematically destroyed—at Haifa, Jaffa and many other places.

One must accept facts. Eight or nine tenths of the refugees will not be able to return. There is talk of installing them in Iraq or in Syria, where land would be given them. This solution, possibly acceptable to the majority, would be hard on the 60–70,000 Christians, especially the 20–30,000 Catholics. They would refuse to go to a Mohammedan land; they would only have the Libanus, which is poor and overpopulated. A return, therefore to the Holy Land is a necessity, the more so as the Holy Land cannot be emptied of its Catholic inhabitants without loss. Efforts and the influence of the Catholics of the world should be directed to this solution. If the problem of the Catholic refugees is reduced to these dimensions it will not be met with total opposition from the Israelite authorities.

GEORGE HAKIM, Archbishop of Galilee.

(The above account of his diocese has been sent us as we are going to press. We have somewhat condensed it in translation.—THE EDITOR.)

NEWS AND COMMENTS

Rome.

On Good Friday Pope Pius XII issued another Encyclical Letter on Palestine, *Redemptoris Nostri*. It is a sequel to the *In Multiplicibus* of October 1948. The Holy Father urges that the city and suburbs of Jerusalem be under an international régime and that the Holy Places be safeguarded everywhere in Palestine, that pilgrims have free access to them and tranquil sojourn there.

Istanbul.

In the *E.C.Q.* of October–December 1948 we gave the bare news of the election of the new Ecumenical Patriarch. Through the kindness of the Rev. Austin Oakley, General Secretary of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, we are now able to give a photograph and some details concerning the patriarch.

Archbishop Athenagoras was born in 1886 at Vassiliko in the Epirus. Later he was a student at Halki Theological College, then bishop of Corfu. He was sent to the U.S.A. as archbishop in charge of the Greek Orthodox Church there, and in 1948 became an American citizen. He is now a Turkish subject. The new patriarch has already taken a leading part in works of charity in Turkey and in the organization of Greek schools.

His title is that of Ecumenical Patriarch, archbishop of Constantinople and the New Rome. We offer him our respectful greetings and ask our readers to pray for him.

Arab Christians.

Mgr. Hakim has himself very kindly sent the two photographs that we print here. The following information is from two other friends!

Mgr. Hakim, the Catholic Melkite archbishop of Haifa and Galilee, is one of the most outstanding figures in the Christian Arab world today. The archbishop was born at Tantan in Egypt, his parents being of a Syrian family originally coming from Aleppo. As a boy he was educated at the College of St. Louis and then at the Jesuit School in Cairo. He then went to St. Anne's Seminary in Jerusalem. After his ordination he eventually became Superior of the Patriarchal College in Cairo. He also was the founder of the Greek Catholic monthly publication, *Le Lien*. In 1943 he was appointed archbishop of Haifa and Galilee. He is regarded as the protector of Christians in Northern Palestine by both Catholics and Orthodox and from the moment of his arrival gave the full weight of his support to the Arab cause. He maintained that his flock had everything in common politically with their Moslem cousins. For some time he was exiled from his diocese. But he is now back in Haifa reorganizing his people and working with the Holy Land Arab refugee fund.

Palestine.

On 27th behalf of the partition plan communities.

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Palestine.

On 27th March 1948 *The Tablet* published a protest on behalf of the "Christian Union" in Jerusalem against the partition plan. The signatories were eleven leaders of Christian communities in the Holy city including four Catholic of various rites.

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A report on behalf of the Eastern Churches in Jerusalem issued by the International Christian Committee for Relief of Arab Refugees on 25th August 1948 has been sent us by the Rev. W. C. Klein, American Episcopalian chaplain in Jerusalem. It is a memorandum on Christian refugees in Palestine. The committee assumes that the various Catholic communities will be helped by their Church authorities. Having investigated the needs of the other Eastern Christians they are of opinion that most of the cost of relief should come from the various Eastern Christians in the U.S.A.—Greek Orthodox, Armenians, etc.

We quote these few lines. As the outlook on the question it is frank and encouraging. "In the Arab countries it is universally, if mistakenly, felt that the United States is more responsible than any other power for the tribulations of Palestine. The work of Christian missionaries in the Near East for at least a century to come will be built very largely on the interest American Christians can be made to show in a land to which American policy has brought gigantic grief and colossal suffering."

Since 1948 there has been much more suffering.

The London address of the Holy Land Arab relief fund is:—6 Upper Phillimore Gardens, W.8.

The Catholic Melkites.

Two new bishops have been appointed at the synod that assembled under the presidency of the Patriarch Maximos IV at 'Ain Trag in September 1948; they are Mgr. Philip Nab'a as metropolitan of Beirut and Mgr. Michael 'Assaf bishop of Petra, 'Amman and the Transjordan.

The U.N.E.S.C.O. held its third general conference at Beirut in November–December 1948. On 17th November the delegates assisted at the Pontifical Byzantine Liturgy celebrated by Mgr. Nab'a in the Maronite church of St. George. On 8th December they assisted at the liturgy celebrated by the Archimandrite Clement Bardawil, superior general

of the Salvatorian monks, at Saint Saviour's Monastery near Saida.

Lebanon.

The latest official statistics of the population of the Lebanon according to religions and sects.

Maronites	355,182
Sunnites	252,220
Shiites	224,368
Greek Orthodox	133,130
Druzes	79,219
Armenians	72,430
Greek Catholics	65,860
Protestants	25,954
Syrians (Syriac Rite)	9,305
Jews	6,677
Chaldeans	6,420
Latins	4,607
Others	6,226

Copied from the newspaper *Le Journal d'Egypte*, Friday, 18th February.

Egypt.

The Coptic patriarch, Yussab II is planning the establishment of schools in all the villages along the Nile and also many new churches; also better stipends for the parish clergy. This is doubtless in emulation of the work done by the Free Schools' Association organized by Father Ayrout among the Catholic Copts.

Our Contemporaries.

The Copts by J. Murtagh, S.M.A. This is a thirty-six page booklet recently brought out and printed in Egypt. It has a foreword by Mgr. Hughes. It gives a brief history of Christianity in Egypt beginning with the Holy Family and St. Mark right up to the present day. This is done in a number of short paragraphs under such general headings as:—“Before the Schism,” “The Schism,” “After the Schism” and “Modern Times.” There is also a chapter on the rise of Christian Monasticism—Egypt was the land of its origin.

This is an excellent little book to put into the hands of anyone who shows an interest in the Copts. It would be good to have similar books on other groups of Eastern Christians.

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The *Syro-Malabar Church*, by Father Romeo Thomas T.O.C.D. This is a pamphlet of seventeen pages from St Joseph's Press, Mannanam. It is the most up-to-date statement of the past history and of the present position of Christianity in Kerala or Malabar. We sincerely hope that the Indian Catholics of the Syrian rite will be able now to spread throughout India.

Le Lien, the monthly review (mostly in French) published at the Catholic Melkite Patriarchal college at Cairo (165 Avenue Reine Nazli), kept up its good standard during 1948. A good deal of its contents is necessarily of only local appeal, but by no means all. And among the items we may remark as of interest to our readers were two plain-speaking notes on the Pallium and the Patriarchs, and on the Patriarchal Office and the Cardinalate; references to contacts between Catholics and Orthodox (including a photograph of the Internuncio of the Holy See and the Orthodox pope and patriarch of Alexandria embracing one another); and a striking obituary notice of Kyr Paul Salman, first archbishop of Transjordania, who died on 1st July, last year.

The Clergy Review (May 1949). There is a good article on the recently published Roman legislation on Eastern Church Marriage Laws. We refer those who wish to study the matter in English to Father Marbach's book *Marriage Legislation for Catholics of the Oriental Rites in the U.S.A. and Canada* reviewed in the *E.C.Q.* October-December 1946.

Unitas, English Edition. As we go to press the much desired English edition of *Unitas* has appeared. It is published at The Graymoor Press, Peekskill, N.Y., U.S.A., by the Friars of the Atonement. We welcome this English review which will give to the public Rome's comments on the work of the Ecumenical Movement. We will review it in our next issue.

OBITUARY

SIDNEY HERBERT DRANE-SCOTT.

On 12th February the rector of Oddington passed away.
R.I.P.

Dr. Scott of Oddington will be remembered as an Anglican champion of the Holy See and at the same time an outstanding scholar of the history of the Eastern Churches. His scholarship was given to the world in his great work *The Eastern Churches and the Papacy* for which the University of Oxford gave him a doctor's degree. We are told that the thesis he took for his B.Litt. was *The Theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria*. This is still only in manuscript. He wrote a number of smaller treatises:—*General Councils and Anglican Claims*, *Anglo-Catholicism and Reunion*. The Rev. J. C. Morton Howard gives us a glimpse of a very lovable side of his character in *The Pilot* and he ends his notice with this interesting statement:—“Dr. Scott’s position as to the Church of England was that as she accepts at least the first Four General Councils, maintains that nothing shall be preached by her clergy save what is contained in Holy Scripture interpreted by the Catholic fathers and ancient bishops, claims that she has not forsaken the churches of France, Spain and Italy, she is committed to the supremacy of the Holy See; that reunion cannot be reached save by admitting this fact, nor can reunion be accomplished unless there is a unity of faith.”

He was of the tradition of the Tractarians.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF ATHENS.

As we go to press the death of Archbishop Damaskinos has just been announced in *The Times* of May 21st.

Born in 1891 at Cardista he was educated at the University of Athens and entered the Church at the age of twenty-six. From the first his abilities were recognized, for his life was now employed in one position of trust after another, from being superior of the monastery of Pentili, bishop of Corinth, archbishop of Athens and regent.

He served his people and his Church in every possible way with heroic courage and great success. May he still remain an inspiration to Greece at the present time.

Grant him, Lord, eternal rest!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NICOLAS BERDYAEV

SIR,

More than one of your readers may have noticed the contradictory character of the long-awaited memorial article on Berdyaev in your last issue. It falls into two roughly equal parts, of which the first is useful and informative as to certain facts, and even succeeds in presenting (on pp. 45-6) a very fair summary of his position as a Christian thinker. In the second half, however, the tone changes abruptly, and we have something which reads curiously like a censure on the thought and writing of a bad or unsound *Catholic!* This seems a queer result to have emerged after so long a delay, and from so much labour on the part of the writer, the Rev. Father Schultze, S.J.

One cannot but feel that the latter half of the article is far too heavily characterized by a "static" outlook on the part of its writer to be found adequate as an estimate of a mind which moves entirely among dynamic categories; and one is left reflecting that a procedure which entails the application to a philosophic thinker of a set of criteria based upon the methods and assumptions of a system which he himself in his own writings everywhere vigorously repudiates is, to say the least, of very doubtful value. To any student of Berdyaev, it must appear impossible to arrive at a valid and acceptable estimate of his thought from within monistic categories; while, to a Catholic, it seems quite unjustifiable to assume—as it is everywhere assumed in the more critical portion of this article—that the particular system favoured, apparently, by its writer necessarily carries with it the title to be accepted as the "Catholic philosophy" *par excellence*. One is not, in fact, aware that any particular philosophic method or system has yet been canonized by the Church. But I would ask your permission, Sir, to raise one or two specific points.

On p. 47 we read, "In the field of anthropology and Christian humanism Berdyaev's merits are undeniable. Here, however, are seen also the limits and the danger of his philosophic thought. In particular, in the search to establish the relation of man to God, to distinguish the natural from the supernatural, intuition from Revelation, *to found human freedom in God* (italics ours), he falls into error." Then, six lines down, in the same paragraph: "His attempt to establish the endeavour, creative faculty and freedom of man *as not depending*

on God (italics again ours) leads him to distinguish in God a primary "divine nothing," the godhead (the *Ungrund* of Jacob Boehme) from the secondary creator-god, and to found human freedom, independent of the creator-god, in "divine nothing," from which indeed the Trinity and the creator-god were first born. He fails to see that a creative activity of man independent of God's will and essence will be robbed of its innermost worth."

As to the italicized matter: it seems hardly fair to analyse such a passage until the writer shall himself have reconsidered it. As to the assertion contained in the concluding sentence, Berdyaev is well able to speak for himself. I would refer your readers, Sir, to *The Destiny of Man*: II, iii, 2, (pp. 163-4). "Creativeness is only possible because the world is created, because there is a Creator. Man, made by God in His own image and likeness, is also a creator and is called to creative work. Creativeness . . . presupposes first, man's primary meonic uncreated freedom; secondly, the gifts bestowed upon man the creator by God the Creator, and, thirdly, the world as the field for his activity . . . Man is not the source of his gifts and genius. He has received them from God and therefore feels that he is God's hand and is an instrument of God's work in the world . . . The genius feels that he acts not of himself, but is possessed by God and is the means by which God works His own ends and designs." Nothing need here be said about this passage except that it is in flat contradiction of Fr. Schultze's assertion, which is now seen to rest upon a complete misrepresentation of Beryaev's real thought.

We are told (*art. cit.* p. 51) that "his real desire was not to solve and decide questions, but to propose them and expose them down to the last detail." (This is of course quite true of one who described himself as "moving in the sphere of Christian problematics": cf. *Freedom and the Spirit*: Introd. C. xix). "Yet," pursues Fr. Schultze, "he frequently forgets that this is his purpose, and . . . begins to dogmatize and teach with an authority that would brook no contradiction." But this complaint is in itself the evidence of the most striking of all Fr. Schultze's failures: namely, that nowhere in its entire course does his study show any comprehension of the most significant of all the elements in Berdyaev's thought—its prophetic character. He neither alludes to this nor seems anywhere otherwise than quite oblivious of it; yet it is surely in the element of prophecy in his thought and its

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expression that the key to the man's whole life-work must be found to lie. It is owing to the presence of this prophetic *afflatus* as an incalculable factor in his inward life, that Berdyaev is not content merely to propound questions, but is impelled also to "expose them down to the last detail." And if this should seem to entail a certain amount of that "dogmatizing and teaching" of which Fr. Schultze complains, no one need be a penny the worse for the impact upon him of deeply and passionately held Christian moral conviction, as distinct from that of mere intellectual persuasion and entertained opinion.

And finally, we are given (p. 51) a long and formidable list of those topics, in his treatment of which Fr. Schultze finds his subject to have committed "numerous errors." To such of your readers, however, as may have some acquaintance with Berdyaev's works, it would have been more interesting to have had chapter and verse for a few of these: the bare enumeration of the domains in which they are said to have occurred carries too little weight, and too much suggestion of those "phobias" which haunt the brain of the heresy-hunter. Yet it may be said that it is to two subjects in particular, which figure at the end of this list, i.e. "the meaning of asceticism, Christian marriage . . ." that Berdyaev, as a professed Christian anthropologist, has devoted some of the profoundest and most radically Christian thinking and expression that our times have known. He indicates within these domains precisely those vital problems which press most urgently for full and unflinching confrontation, and for deeper, more far-reaching, and more integrally Christian solutions than they have yet received. And if he "exposes" these problems "down to the last detail," and indicates the direction and nature of the solutions, as it may seem perhaps with a certain force, this may well be because the "official" philosophies, the Christian as well as the non or anti-Christian, are found either to glide superficially over them where they do not more or less deliberately ignore them), or are blandly and blissfully unaware of their existence. Your readers, Sir, may be referred to (e.g.) *The Destiny of Man*, I, iii, 2-3, and II, iv, 8-9; and to *Essai de Métaphysique Eschatologique*: (Paris : Aubier, 1946) final chapter, pp. 272-5.

The bibliography of Berdyaev's works available in English should include *Man and the Machine, etc.* (Sheed and Ward) and *The Fate of Man in the Modern World* (S.C.M. Press).

I am, Sir,

Yours etc.,

J.T.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Awakening of Modern Egypt. By M. Rifaat Bey. Longmans, Green and Co. Pp. vi, 242. 15s.

Egypt's national ambitions are very important if we would understand the Near East today; and these ambitions can only be rightly appreciated if contemplated against their historical background. This is the task which M. Rifaat Bey has set himself in the book under review, and he would be a bold man who would not admit that the learned author has succeeded in expounding the historical facts in admirable sequence with a fine sense of proportion.

Rifaat Bey begins—as is only fitting—with the impact of Napoleon upon the slumbering Egypt of the Mamelukes, whose rule in the name of the Sultan, was effective only because of the complete absence of opposition and the utter apathy of their subjects. When the episode of the French invasion was reversed by British naval power and a military expeditionary force under Abercrombie in 1801 allied with a token Turkish force, the first seeds of the new nationalism were sown in a fertile soil. Neither Mameluke nor the Sultan was to profit by the new leaven but that great adventurer Mohammed Ali. After a period of faction fighting he himself had encouraged, “the sheikhs, in the name of the people, deposed the Turkish governor” and nominated Ali to replace him in 1806; who secured himself in power despite opposition from both French and English in turn. Thus began a reign of over forty years, actually independent, nominally as the Sultan's viceroy, which—stained with blood though it was—brought considerable wealth to Egypt, linked its destiny with the west and initiated a process of development both of agriculture and industry which alone could have supported the social progress of the succeeding century.

It was, no doubt, a tragedy for Egypt, that the brilliant Ibrahim predeceased his father Mohammed Ali, for the succession fell in 1848 to the latter's grandson, Abbas “a selfish, sullen, severe master, incapable of adapting himself to the new state of things created by his grandfather.” Schools were shut, industrial enterprises abandoned and the proposed Suez canal was interdicted. This policy was reversed by his uncle, Said, who succeeded him on his assassination in 1858; for Said was under French influence and a friend of de Lesseps, in favour of whose scheme taxation was increased and the fellahs found themselves impressed for service in the “ditch.”

“Ismail the Great” in 1863. One of the most essential things in the developing of the Sudan; designed Cairo as the capital of the country its independence from France and bankruptcy lie in 1879 but the p—
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"Ismail the Magnificent," son of Ibrahim, succeeded Said in 1863. Of him our author says he was "wanting in one essential thing—patience." He invested vast fortunes in developing first cotton then sugar; he sought to dominate the Sudan; he carried to a successful conclusion the long designed Canal, giving his name to Ismailia; he gave the country its first constitution; he attracted capital from France and England—and finally drove his country into bankrupt liquidation! He was deposed by Constantinople in 1879 but though the voice was that of the Sultan, the words—and the power behind them—were those of the bankers of Europe!

Ismail's unfortunate son, Tewfik, now took up the reins: but the Khedivate had received a shock from which it never recovered. Disaffection in the army, diplomatic pressure from London and Paris through Constantinople to protect investments and half-determined aspirations of Turkey to secure imperial suzerainty, all weakened his position; he must needs depend on his minister, Cherif, as none of his predecessors had done, and Cherif was a nationalist and a Liberal. So with written constitution, a Chamber of elected Deputies, a rapidly increasing educated class, thanks largely to the Catholic Missionary Schools and a growing number of young Egyptians gaining experience in administration—industrial civil and later military—the scene was set for Egypt's advance to full nationhood, under the protection of the *Pax Britannica* (a fact which our author does not underline!).

What is to be the final precipitation? This volume closes with the riots of 1919; but since then a new element has made itself felt in the form of a certain xenophobia which was conspicuous by its absence hitherto. With this is connected a renaissance of a certain excessive enthusiasm for Islam which would cut across the lines of national unity: for if Egypt is to be a united state on modern occidental lines, she must not refuse on religious grounds citizenship to her nationals otherwise qualified: native born, well-behaved citizens of Syrian, Armenian, Arab, Maronite and most of all Coptic descent must be granted true equality before the law, in spite of their non-conforming to the national religion. Who is to succeed: the spiritual descendants of Zaghlul Pasha or the Moslem Brotherhood? We look forward for enlightenment to Rifaat's next volume—and the inscrutable future!

DOM THOMAS RIGBY.

Introduction A La Théologie Musulmane, Essai de théologie comparée. Louis Gardet et M.-M. Anawati, O.P. Vrin, Paris, 1948. Pp. viii-543
(Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale, Vol. XXXVII.)

Interest in Muslim Theology has been stirred up during these past few years by the appearance of such works as Tritton's *Muslim Theology*, Sweetman's *Islam and Christian Theology*, and Gibb's *Modern Trends in Islam*. The work under consideration is a more than a worthy addition to such literature. Its authors are Catholic theologians, profoundly at home with the Thomist synthesis, and almost equally well versed in the theology of Islam. What gives their work a unique value is indicated by the subtitle. There have been many works on comparative religion, but none, so far as I know, which can rightly be called works on comparative theology. Muslim theology, which bears so many resemblances to Catholic theology, offers a most fertile field for comparative study. It is true that the resemblances seem to be more superficial than certain orientalists would admit, and that the differences are radical and fundamental, but the undertaking of such study by such competent men as the authors of the present work seems well calculated to bear fruit, not only in the field of Catholic theology, but especially in the field of Islam itself.

The book is not easy reading and is made more complicated for the non-arabist by the profusion of Arabic names and technical terms that have to be considered. But the authors explain the terms carefully and one soon becomes accustomed to the unfamiliar names. The work as a whole is divided into three main parts. In the three chapters of the first part Muslim theology is placed in its historical context, its position in the Muslim hierarchy of knowledge is indicated, and several typical treatises are briefly analysed, always with an eye to similar developments in Catholic theology. The second part of the work is a long but particularly interesting *excursus* on the genesis of Christian theology considered in its references to Muslim thought. In two chapters the later Patristic period and the age of Scholasticism are reviewed compactly but profoundly, particular emphasis being placed on the Thomistic synthesis. The third part, "Nature and Method," is more directly concerned with comparative study. The first chapter deals with faith and reason in Christian theology and Muslim theology. In the second chapter the authors investigate the uses of the theological *loci* and the *œuvre théologique* properly so called in the two disciplines. Final

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emphasis is put on a difference alluded to many times in the course of the work : whereas the function of Catholic theology is both defensive and illuminative, that of Muslim theology is almost entirely defensive. One of the chief reasons for this is the absence, in Islam, of any strictly supernatural mysteries. The great mystery is Allah Himself, intellectually attainable only by what we should call natural theology.

Not the least interesting part of this excellent and learned work is the final section entitled "Perspectives d'avenir." It is these perspectives that are of pressing interest to the readers of the *E.C.Q.* and to all who have the true interests of Islam at heart. It is with a lively interest, bordering on impatience, that we wait for the two promised volumes which will examine the great problems of Muslim theology. If they are written, as there is every reason to suppose they will be, with the same competence and intellectual charity that mark this introductory volume, they will do much to add to our own appreciation of our grand theological heritage and to strengthen the hope that it may soon be shared by those whose own theological heritage is by no means inconsiderable. *Campion Hall, Oxford.* RICHARD J. McCARTHY, S.J.

The Bogomils, A Study in Balkan Manichaeism. By Dmitri Obolensky Cambridge University Press. 25s.

Bogomilism has been recognized as a vital factor in the early Medieval Christianity of both East and West. It was a form of dualism, notably ascetic in its morals, ultimately Manichean in its origins, the theme of Byzantine controversialists and a probable source of the subterranean Manichean heresies of medieval Italy and perhaps of the open Manichæism of the Provençal Albigenses. But previous references to Bogomilism have been based largely on surmise and couched frequently in vague generalizations. Prince Obolensky has provided the first definitive study of its origins and of its primal shape in the Bulgarian empire. He deals in turn with the Manichean Legacy, with Manichæism in the Near East, with the origins of Balkan Dualism, with Bogomilism in the first Bulgarian Empire, with Byzantine Bogomilism and with the Bogomils in the second Bulgarian Empire. Five appendices have been added, three of them deal with points of detail, two are general surveys of Bogomilism in Russia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the relationship between the Bogomils and the Western Cathari and Patareni.

The primary significance of the work of Prince Obolensky lies in the fact that it is an achievement of pure scholarship. It is marked throughout by a minutely meticulous accuracy, by a complete freedom from bias or preconception and by a very balanced analysis of the value of sources. It is perhaps worth recording that this reviewer can state all this as a very carefully considered judgment since he once had the obligation of checking nearly every reference and argument in Prince Obolensky's study. It is hard to overestimate the significance for Slavonic and Byzantine studies in this country of the emergence of a scholar of this calibre who is still young and whose position as Reader in Medieval Russian History in Oxford University should give him leisure to prosecute research.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

The Photian Schism. History and Legend. By Francis Dvornik, Cambridge University Press. Ph. xiv, 504, octavo. 35s.

Photius, saint and hero in the eyes of the Christians East is branded by the Christian West as a man who unbolted the safeguards of unity and let loose the disruptive forces of dissent and schism, a symbol of pride and lust for ecclesiastical domination, an element destructive of Christian universality; he is hailed by all who ever claimed a larger share for nationalism in the life of the Church and a closer association between man and God. For centuries he has stood as the sign of contradiction, a symbol of disunion, a challenge that keeps apart the Western and Eastern fragments of Christendom.

Dr. Dvornik has well prepared himself in these studies and wishes to propose the solution of the historical problem which this antagonism poses. The central figure of the intellectual renaissance of the ninth century, president of the Imperial Chancellery he was selected to succeed St. Ignatius as Patriarch of Constantinople. His enemies painted him in such malevolent colours that they left him with a name blackened for centuries. The Photian case is not merely a matter of Byzantine interest. It concerns the history of Christianity and of the world, as the appraisement of Photius and his work lies at the core of the controversies that separate the Eastern and Western Churches. By his patient inquiries Dr. Dvornik certifies that Photius, the great Father of the Eastern Church, has for centuries been treated by the whole of the West with unmerited scorn and contempt. Professor

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Dvornik re-establishes his reputation with solid argument and recognizes in Photius a great Churchman, a learned humanist and a genuine Christian, generous enough to forgive his enemies and to take the first step towards reconciliation. Among the simple Orthodox the conviction always prevailed that their church could not be wrong in crowning its leader with the halo of sanctity already in the tenth century when she was in communion with Rome. His worst mistake was his loss of self-control in 867 when he went out of his way to launch a futile attack on the patriarch of the Old Rome: the hasty lapse brought with it fatal consequences. It strengthened the position of the anti-Byzantine party in Rome, it contributed to Photius' downfall and widened the gap between East and West. The excited clamours against the great Nicholas I uttered then by the Eastern bishops reechoed over East and West for many years afterwards. In what followed it seems that Photius realized his mistake: endeavouring to make peace with prominent Roman personalities, to compromise on the Bulgarian issue—the occasion of his outburst—he hoped that time would heal the wound; events were to show that he was wrong. The cloud affected all religious and cultural contacts between East and West and raised problems that were to poison the relations between the two Churches and influence the whole cause of Christian development for centuries. The Acts of Photian synods of 861 and 879-880 which escaped the notice of the Western canonists were completely obliterated by the Ignatian synod of 869-870; in 861 the Eastern Church *de facto* accepted the right of recourse to the patriarch of Rome as the highest court of appeal, even in disciplinary matters; the second stipulated that each Church should follow its own practices; two things overlooked unhappily by the Western canonists who framed the Western political philosophy and its unilateral conception of universality. We can now reconsider in the best interest of Christianity both the vital period of the ninth century and the trail of misconceptions it left behind; the conciliatory atmosphere prevailed in Byzantium at the end of the tenth century, when the last echo of the struggles round Photius and Leo VI's tetragamy died down and was stilled by the decisions of the synods of 920 and 991. By the famous *Tomos of the Union* the Fathers closed all previous dissensions and schisms and in the Feast of Orthodoxy the Eastern Church celebrated its victory over the last heresy, iconoclasm and its aftermath.

DOM IRENAEUS DOENS,
Monk of Amay Chevetogne

Etherie, Journal de Voyage, texte latin, introduction et traduction
By Hélène Pétré. Sources Chrétiennes, 1948.

Perhaps we have here one of the most interesting and useful publications which the *Sources Chrétiennes* collection has so far produced. It would seem too that the introduction and notes show a greater care and scholarship than one is prepared for, although the standard of *Sources Chrétiennes* is uncontroversially high.

Whatever name we choose to give to the devout religious woman of the early centuries of Christianity who leaves the record of her journeys through Bible lands, whatever century we assign to her, or place of origin, we have to thank her for a narrative which is full of the verdant freshness of the dawn of the Church. Simplicity, candour, joy, peace and the memory of One who walked among men, are the marks of early Christianity. Etheria possesses all these. Probably from Galicia, a nun and a lady of quality, she seeks the Holy places, Sinai where the Law was given at the first Pentecost, Gessen where Israel dwelt in Egypt, Mount Nebo where Moses saw the promised land and gave his soul to God, Idumaea the land of Job, Mesopotamia, Tarsis, Seleucia, Chalcedon, but above all, Jerusalem the Holy City.

From the point of view of Biblical study the document is of paramount importance. Both the names of places and their sites have worried scholars for centuries, and although the evidence provided by Etheria has to be carefully sifted and weighed, yet few would deny its real value or set it aside as worthless. As one brief instance may be mentioned the question as to the site of the Cities of the Plain, the *pentapolis*, whether below or above the Dead Sea.

The student of early forms of the Christian Liturgy will find plenty of matter in the quiet, objective description of the rites performed at the Holy Places in Jerusalem. The historian and theologian, who may have hitherto neglected Etheria, will find evidence for a more accurate conception of the ecclesiastical orders, and especially of the function of the deacon, and for a fuller understanding of the *charisma* of monasticism in the life of the Church. But the outstanding merit of this fascinating journal is not so much its value to students as its reflection of the *geist* of the early Church.

DOM GREGORY REES.

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La Prière des Eglises de Rite Byzantin. By R. P. E. Mercenier and Chanoine François Paris, Monastery of Chevetogne, Belgium. Second edition 1948. Tome I. Pp. xl, 471. 735 francs Belgian.

This volume, of which the first edition was published in 1937, comes from the pen of a monk of Amay (now at Chevetogne, in the Ardennes) and a member of *L'Oeuvre d'Orient* and gives the French translation of the texts of the Divine Office, the three Liturgies and the Forms used in the administration of the Sacraments in the Byzantine rite.

The Preface, by Cardinal Tisserant, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, is retained from the first edition. A Foreword to the new edition tells us that many rubrics have been corrected and the general layout rearranged with a view to making easier the understanding of the principal offices.

A long Introduction details the rites in use inside and outside the Church—a footnote draws a striking contrast between the authenticity of the ancient rites, whosever may use them, and the lack of authority of the rites and offices compiled by protestant reformers.

Detailed descriptions, with illustrations, give a clear picture of the typical Byzantine church building and its furniture, the altar and its vessels, the liturgical and normal ecclesiastical dress of the clergy, the books used (listed for both Catholic and Orthodox churches).

The editors explain that cost has prevented the printing of the Greek text alongside of the French translation, and they make clear that the work is neither a treatise on liturgical law nor a course of sacramental theology but for those who wish to pursue these subjects they give useful indications of the sources in which information may be sought.

There can be nothing but praise for the compilers of this very complete presentation of the Byzantine rites as used by so many, many thousands, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

In each Part the Introduction, although short, contains a most concise description of what is to follow: the division of the text of each office, liturgy and other service by sub-headings in bold type brings out the historical origin and the doctrinal signification of the ceremonies and prayers. Translations of the Holy Liturgies of Saints John Chrysostom and Basil abound: there are a few, very few English renderings of parts of the Divine Office, of the Office of Holy Oil, of Baptism and of Holy Matrimony but nothing so complete,

so accurate and so correct theologically and liturgically is available. This work, albeit in French, provides in a convenient form everything that the student of the Byzantine rite needs to know about the invariable parts of the services with which it deals : the variable parts appear in later volumes. Not only to students is *Tome I* recommended wholeheartedly, but to every Catholic who, in wishing to know something of these venerable rites, will find therein many beautiful prayers and much matter for meditation for all seasons and every occasion.

D. C. McP.

Three Byzantine Saints. Translated by Elizabeth Dawes and Norman H. Baynes. Basil Blackwell. Pp. 270. 21s.

In his introduction to these three lives Professor Baynes says that the purpose of the translation is to provide material for reconstructing the life of the province and humble people, by way of contrast to the life of the élite of the capital which Byzantine literature so often reflects.

The three saints chosen are memorably distinct ; living in different parts of the Empire, they chose different forms of the ascetic life. St. Daniel was a successor of St. Symeon the stylite outside Constantinople in the late fifth century. Theodore who founded a monastery at Sykeon in the late sixth century, became a bishop in central Asia-Minor, and practised such austerities as enclosing himself in an iron cage. John, who died in 619, was not a monk and differed from the other two in his methods, which involved alms-giving on the large scale possible to the patriarch of Alexandria, for he was promoted to that dignity while still a layman.

The characters of all three emerge with delightful clarity. Both Theodore and Symeon showed notable compassion for the myriads of people who flocked to them for help and advice, and it was of a most practical and paternal sort but Daniel influenced governments and became the friend of the Emperor Zeno. Both are attractive but "the humble John" is the most lovable of all with his all-embracing charity and his unwearying championship of the poor and oppressed. He organized relief for prisoners of war and refugees, founded hospitals and, what was peculiarly his characteristic, gave unquestioningly to all in need—or rather to all who asked, for he would have nothing to do with those who wanted a means-test, and was generously indignant that they hesitated to distribute relief to women who still wore ornaments.

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Contemporary documents have been used in each case and to Dr. Dawes' translations Professor Baynes has added introductions and notes. Everyone will be left wishing for more.

A. T. HART.

Palestine. "La Belgique au secours des Réfugiés de Palestine." Booklet issued by Comité Palestina 9 Rue de la Bonté, Brussels. 20 Francs.

This quite excellent publication issued by The Headquarters of the Belgian Catholic Relief for Palestine Movement, to which all profits on its sale will go, carries a Foreword by His Eminence Cardinal Van Roey. Profusely illustrated the booklet covers the whole aspect of the present tragic situation in an objective and non-partisan fashion. A brief but exceptionally clear account of the political events leading up to the present tragic plight of the hundreds of thousands of refugees is accompanied by details of the aid brought to these poor folk with the adoption of Nazareth by the Diocese of Liège following on the Abbé Naveau's Mission and from which the present nation-wide charitable appeal has grown.

The photographs and text generally give a very clear idea of the Palestine scene and of the appalling plight of the refugees. Also of the heroic attempts being made by such a small nation as Belgium to alleviate their sufferings. Reference to Zionist claims and additions is fair and sympathetic but the transcending rights of the actual inhabitants of the country to receive just consideration are stressed, as the author of the historical summary in the booklet points out that such rights are of as great importance as the safeguarding of the Holy Places.

In view of the general ignorance of so much concerning the Holy Land in England and America it is to be hoped an English version of the booklet may be produced. Perusal of this would enable the reader to obtain some of the best and most concise information available on one of the greatest and most tragic problems of the day and in addition would surely bring home the urgent and vital need to succour the thousands and thousands of poor homeless folk whose only fault is that they dwelt in a land for many hundreds of years coveted by another homeless and persecuted race.

J.W.R.-F.

Dante, the Philosopher. By Étienne Gilson. Sheed and Ward
Pp. 327. 15s.

The Divine Comedy is not only a great work of art, but also a vast synthesis of human experience. Was that synthesis made from the point of view of a theologian or of a philosopher? Père Maldonnet¹ replied "A theologian." "No!" says Professor Gilson "A philosopher." He begins by showing that Beatrice cannot be a mere symbol of certain theological realities. Though his logic in refuting Père Maldonnet is relentless his tone is good humoured, the reverse of domineering, and his arguments quite convincing. He goes on to show that Dante's standpoint is clear and consistent throughout the Banquet, the Monarchy and the Divine Comedy: it is that of an ardent social reformer, who deems his views consistent with his profound Catholic Faith. He advocated the establishment of a single State which should include the whole human race, and have one ruler, the Emperor; by this means would universal peace be secured with the maximum of justice and happiness for everyone.

Social reform in the Middle Ages could not leave out of count the Church; the basic problem lay in regulating the relation between Church and State, or in other terms, the relation between the Supernatural and the Natural orders, between Theology and Philosophy. Dante followed the teaching of Aristotle and Saint Thomas Aquinas mainly, but he did not hesitate to modify their teaching, or borrow from the Latin Averroists in order to establish a thesis, which was peculiarly his own. He maintained that the Church, the State, and Philosophy were supreme and autonomous in their own sphere, subject only and directly to God. He conceived their relationship as that of separate sovereign states working together in perfect harmony for mutual assistance, without subjection or domination by any of them. In this he differed both from St. Thomas and the Averroists. St. Thomas considered the Church as the sovereign state with two satellite states, the Empire and Philosophy; Averroes considered Philosophy as the sovereign state whose satellites were religion and the civil power.

Professor Gilson refrains from commenting on Dante's own thesis and confines himself to elucidating it. In doing so he has thrown light on many difficult situations in the Divine Comedy notably, the eulogy of Siger of Brabant in the *Paradiso*, by St. Thomas, who in this life was his protagonist.

¹ *Dante, le Théologien.* Paris 1935

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We think this book an important contribution to dantesque scholarship, but one which contains something of wider interest. Dante's formula for world-happiness was: one monarchy for the whole world working in *entire* harmony with the Catholic Church thus only could universal peace and the highest measure of justice for all be secured . . . maybe he was right!

E.P.W.

The Inside of the Cup and *For Better and for Worse* both by Father F. Valentine, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications, 6s and 5s. respectively); *We live with our eyes open* by Dom Hubert van Zeller (Sheed and Ward 7s. 6d.).

All three books are meant to help the present generation of Catholics to face up to the world in which they live. The first two books of Fr. Valentine follow one another in the instruction they give or the problems they cope with, whereas that of Dom van Zeller contains mostly what is in the others. They are characteristic of these two spiritual guides and are very worth while getting and reading.

K.F.E.W.

BOOK RECEIVED

Oxford University Press: *Byzantium*. Edited by Norman H. Baynes and H. St L. B. Moss.

Sheed and Ward: *The Creed in Slow Motion*. By Ronald Knox. Burns and Oates: *The Origins of the Great Schism*. By Walter Ullmann.

S.P.C.K.: *Eucharistic Consecration in the Primitive Church*. By G. A. Mitchell.

Augustinus-Verlag, Würzburg: *Das Geistige Antlitz der Ostkirche*. By von Georg Wunderle. *Der eschatologische Zug in der ostkirchlichen Frömmigkeit*. By von H. M. Biedermann, O.E.S.A.

Chevetogne, Belgique: *La Prière des Eglises de Rite Byzantin II*.

REVIEWS

Scottish Journal of Theology. Edinburgh.
Analecta Ordinis S. Basili Magni. Rome.
Christ und Welt. Vienna.

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